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EXTERNAL BARRIERS THAT LIMIT OR IMPEDE THE OCCUPATIONAL
ACHIEVEMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL BLACK WOMEN WORKING
IN PREDOMINATELY WHITE ORGANIZATIONS

A Dissertation Presented

by

EDITH BERNADETTE BATTLE GONSAL

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1991

School of Education

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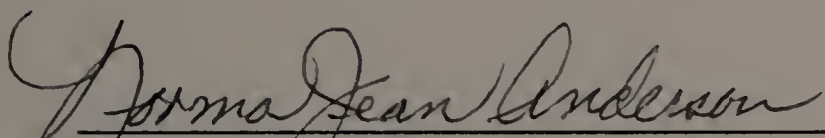
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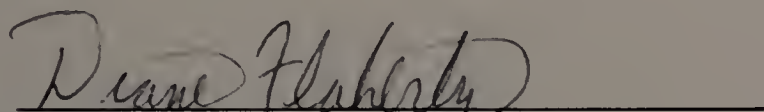
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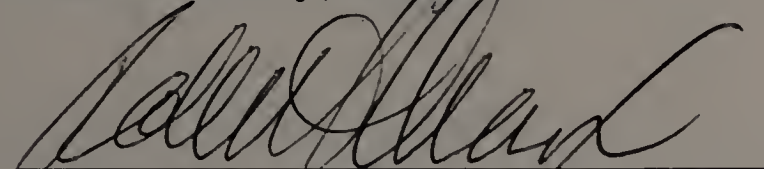
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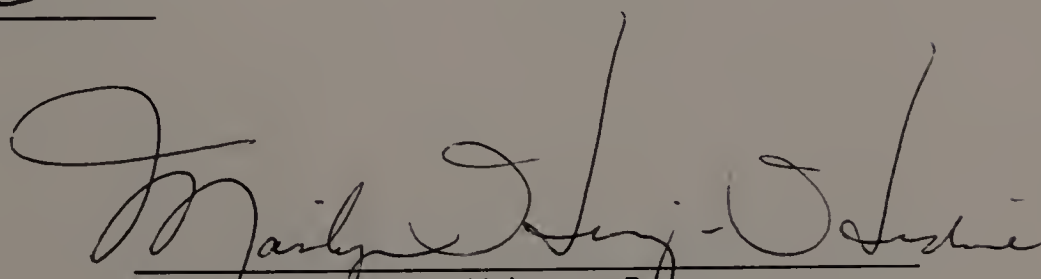
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"In all ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy path."
Proverbs 3:6

To all who acknowledge and believe in the concept that we are all extensions of each other and because of that, we owe nothing to ourselves and owe everything to each other.

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All of you are a gift that I have given to myself, and I could not have done it without you.

ABSTRACT

EXTERNAL BARRIERS THAT LIMIT OR IMPEDE THE OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL BLACK WOMEN WORKING IN PREDOMINATELY WHITE ORGANIZATIONS

May 1991

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The purpose of this study was to examine the external barriers that limit or impede the occupational achievements of professional Black women working in predominately White organizations.

The basic tenet of the study looked at the impact of the beliefs and attitudes of the larger society and how these beliefs manifest themselves in organizations and act as determinants in the equitable distribution of resources in terms of recruitment, selection and promotions for Black women.

Two research questions were developed which provided the design of the study. A set of 15 interview questions was asked of 15 professional Black women working in five major work categories, i.e., education, health care, media, and public and private industries. Responses were examined within the concept of InGroup/OutGroup. The frequency of response to the interview questions concentrated themselves in ten areas. The findings revealed exclusionary treatment in the form of discriminatory practices in the workplace. Implications of these findings for future research are also discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The history of Black women's employment in the United States, despite their higher rates of participation, has clearly shown Black women to be relegated to the worst kind of "women's work." From the time of slavery, their jobs consisted of plowing, hoeing, picking cotton, washing, cleaning, making clothes, serving as domestic help, bearing children of their own and caring for children other than their own (Ladner, 1972; Lerner, 1973; Hooks, 1981). Black women were victims of racial discrimination because they were excluded from respectable occupations and relegated to the lowest paying jobs.

A chronological tracking index locates Black women in the workplace as follows: In 1910, 883 Black women out of 728,309 engaged in nonagricultural pursuits as cotton mill employees and scrub women. In 1920, 80 percent of Black women were nonagricultural workers who were employed as maids, cooks, and washerwomen. During World War I, Black women worked in the munitions industry, on the railroads and in meat packing plants. During World War II, Black females were leaving the kitchens and laundries and occupying clerical positions that were being vacated by Hungarian, Italian and Jewish women. These positions were also at the lowest rung of the occupational ladder and did not provide the buying power necessary for economic stability (Lerner, 1973). Between 1966 and 1969, 75.5 percent of all Black working women were in unskilled work categories.

The influx of women into the labor force during the early 1980s has resulted in nearly equal labor force participation rates among Black women, White women, and women of Hispanic origin. In 1989, 58.7 percent of Black women (6.8 million), 52 percent of White women (47.4 million), and 53.5 percent of Hispanic-origin women (3.7 million) were in the labor force. However, equal labor participation did not guarantee equal representation for certain positions.

In 1986, a survey of corporate women officers employed by Fortune 1000 organizations was conducted. Of the 412 women who comprised the selected population, 52.4 percent responded. None of the respondents had reached the top rung of the management ladder. The proportion of Black women who were surveyed in this study made up only 0.9 percent of the 96.7 percent of all management positions surveyed (U. S. Department of Labor, 1989).

Black women represented only 2.9 percent of all employed managers, up from 2.7 percent in 1987; and their progress had been significantly slower than for all women similarly employed (U. S. Department of Labor, 1989).

Why are Black women at such a glaring occupational disadvantage?

The answer may be linked to cultural ideologies and institutional practices acting as social barriers which are external to Black women. These external barriers include but are not limited to societal gender roles and stereotyping (Josefowitz, 1980); sex discrimination in the area of recruitment; and hiring and promotional practices (Dipboye, Fromkin and Wiback, 1975).

Cultural ideologies as set forth by the larger society are notions about the beliefs and attitudes of certain individuals or groups. These ideologies, acting as the norms, are pervasive and formidable because they are inextricably woven into the fabric and culture of our social institutions (Adam, 1978).

According to Josefowitz (1980), external barriers are not the only obstacle to the occupational achievement of women. She feels that achievement is significantly affected by both internal and external factors. Internal factors are related to traditional roles women have been forced to play in America; but attention needs to be paid to the differences in the socialization process between Black women and White women.

Black women occupy a different position in America than White women because of the very nature of their socialization. This process, which devalues Black women, has been instrumental in influencing the psyches of all Americans by shaping the beliefs and attitudes of the larger society towards the virtues, values and eventual treatment of Black women (Hooks, 1981; Lourde, 1984; Lerner, 1973).

Because their socialization is unique, it is fair to assume that the internal barriers that are imposed upon Black women--to think and act in the roles that have been assigned to them by the larger society--contribute to and reinforce the existence of external barriers.

Statement of the Problem

Although the number of Black women in the work place is sizeable (52 percent of six million female workers), the interested reader will

frequently be frustrated to find that discussion of their unique role in the labor market is unrepresented or almost totally absent from the social science literature (Malveau, 1987; Wallace, 1987). According to Wallace (1987) and Malveau (1987), whenever the literature spoke to the issue of women in the work place, the experience of Black women was always fused to the experience of White women or all women in the work place. The assumption is that all women have the same issues or that White women are the norm from which to measure the behavior or performance of all women. Consequently, the real issues of Black women have not been addressed.

Research studies entitled "Women in the Work Place," "Women in Law," and "Women and Work Issues of the 1980's" are a few of the books and articles that deal briefly, if at all, with Black women's issues (Ferber, 1982). In addition, these research studies were conducted using a monothetic approach to generate knowledge, a method which relies on quantitative techniques for the analyses of data using instruments such as surveys and questionnaires. Researchers conducting studies from this standpoint do not support the belief that social phenomena exist in the mind of the individual and in the objective world. Research conducted from this premise take on the traditional approach which tends to dominate the world of natural science.

By considering only that which can be scientifically quantified, these types of studies fail to take into consideration the human experience and the kinds of activities and relationships, both social and cultural, in which people engage (Lofland, 1984; Patton, 1981). The intent of this study is to examine how Black women perceive and discuss

those barriers that limit or impede their occupational achievement in the workplace. I propose to interview fifteen Black professional women, representing five major work categories: TV/media, private business, public business, health care industry and education. This will be a single study to examine the perceptions Black women have of the workplace and to begin to address the nature of their situation by explicitly focusing on their experiences.

My premise is that a study of these Black women's stories will enhance our understanding of them in the workplace and will facilitate the creation of general theories, concepts and methods.

Significance

From the beginning of the contemporary women's movement in this country (middle of the 1960s) to the present, women have been entering the workplace in record numbers. At the present time, there are six million female workers, 52 percent of whom are Black.

The major distribution of this civilian labor force has fallen into two occupational levels, administrative support services and service jobs. Specifically, 33 percent are occupationally segregated at the administrative level and 68 percent at the service level. The median weekly wages for these positions are \$249.00 for administrative support and \$180.00 for service level positions.

These levels fall within the poverty range as indicated by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1985. The significance of these figures is compounded by the fact that a large number of Black women, 42 percent, are single heads of families. This

emerging problem of poverty as it relates to Black women is largely ignored by the literature and discussed only in the context of "women's issues." Consequently, a myopic view of the issue results.

It is not the intent of this study to recreate another scenario of being equal to yet distant from other women, but rather, through the experience of Black women, to create and contribute a pluralistic approach to the methods, theories and concepts of scientific research. Another important aspect of this study is that the work experience of Black women needs to be said, and in keeping with that thinking, is a respectable manner of research because it is not designed to be generalized. In addition, this study is meant to create a sense of empowerment for Black women, allowing them to use their knowledge and to identify how their life experiences are separate and distinct from those experiences of other women. The proposed study then provides a rich base to develop and implement a career educational program designed to inform and prepare other Black women to enter the work place. Finally, the significance of the study is that it will provide primary information about the role of external barriers and perceptions in determining success and failure as well as a personal sense of competence and efficacy.

Research Questions

The problem to be examined is summarized in the following questions:

- What are the perceptions of Black women regarding external barriers to their occupational achievement?
- How are these barriers manifested in the workplace?

Limitations of the Study

The controlled variable for this study is Black women whose role is to address external barriers to their occupational achievements in the workplace. Other controlled variables are age, self-identification as African Americans, college degree, being born and raised in the United States, employment by the organization for more than four years, and managerial positions. All other factors are uncontrolled.

Since this study will focus on Black women at the managerial level, Black women who occupy levels outside this category will not be discussed. Another variable is that the social institutions selected do not represent the same type of institution from one region to the next. Organizations tend to take on a life of their own, depending on their size, the beliefs and values of the services they provide and the type of individuals who work in the organization. Therefore, the findings may only reflect the problems specific to a given institution and not necessarily of all institutions within or outside the region.

While there are advantages to having a Black interviewer and Black interviewees, there could be potential drawbacks to this approach. Being aware of my own working experience with issues of external barriers and being part of a group that may have similar experiences, I might not be able to maintain a sufficiently "objective" distance. Sometimes when one is part of a group that has similar experiences to one's own, it is more difficult to see, or reflect on, our individual conceptual constructs, assumptions or values.

For many years I have been involved with issues of human relations both in and out of the classroom. I have both participated in and led

groups on issues of oppression and consciousness-raising. These experiences have provided me with sufficient sensitivity, understanding and appreciation to hear accurately what is meant and at the same time have the distance and perspective to notice what seems unique or particular to each woman and group of women. Therefore, I feel I have sufficient qualifications to undertake this study.

Even though this study is aimed in part at gathering perceptual information from Black women, the researcher approaches this study with the full recognition and understanding that perceptions may vary between individuals, depending on the degree of their life experiences. It is not the intent of this study not to recognize the working conditions of other women or to diminish the importance of Black males' perceptions of the same dilemma.

Definition of Terms

For this particular study, I have adopted the following terminology.

Dominant Group are White, male, able-bodied, heterosexual gentiles, born and raised in the United States, who maintain a political, economic and social position of power, influence, and privilege. In this respect, the dominant group has the greatest influence in determining the control and cultural outlook of a society.

Subordinate Group are Black women who have been labeled inferior by the dominant group; denied privilege and access to resources; named negatively, kept powerless, isolated and viewed as unable to learn. In this respect, subordinates are a group who have the least amount of

control in determining the impact dominants have on their social realities.

External barriers are conditions that exist outside the controls of the participants, derived from cultural ideologies created by the larger society and which are manifested in the workplace by impeding or limiting the occupational achievement of individuals. According to Havell (1986) and Dipboye (1986), sexism and racial discrimination may occur in areas of recruitment; while Fromkin and Sherwood (1974) note the same in hiring and promotional practices. Barriers such as these tend to contribute to the situation but are not exclusive to all other factors.

Sexism defines society's discriminatory ideologies and practices as they are reflected in the opportunities given to individuals, with sex being the basis for selective acceptance or rejection.

Oppression is the systematic control of a group of individuals by members of a dominant group, for the distribution of goods, services, rewards, benefits and privileges based on the presumed membership in a particular group.

Perception is the process in which individuals gain knowledge by extracting information from their environment. Learning then becomes part of the information that is acquired through the individual's experience. Forgas and Melamed (1976) point to a number of social scientists who believe that culture influences the direction of perception. Hallowell (1951), an anthropologist, states that "the human organism becomes 'selectively sensitized' to a certain array of stimuli rather than others as a function of the individual memberships in one

cultural group." Hall, Cross and Freedle (1972), Jackson (1975), and Sue (1975) feel that individuals belonging to certain social groups have the greatest probability of holding different perceptions of themselves and others because of the ways they have been socialized to the subordinate position assigned to them by the larger society.

Social control is the assignment of prescribed roles by the dominant group for the purpose of predicting and channeling certain behavior.

Internal barriers is the process of taking on or conforming to normative patterns and values set forth by White middle-class society and rejecting one's own cultural values of identity.

Occupational achievement, used here in its broadest possible sense, incorporates, but is not limited to, notions of occupational aspirations, effectiveness, accomplishments, performance, success, and status as well as occupational and personal empowerment and development.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This study will review the literature relevant to the perceptions of major hurdles that act as external barriers to the occupational achievement of Black women. The first section is a review of literature that points to two areas as the root cause: Black women's social group status and Black women's sex role socialization. Insight into the relationship between these two areas will offer some important insights as to the scope of the barriers that impact on Black women's occupational achievement.

Section One

Social Group Status (Dominants and Subordinates)

At the time we are born, we become members of a social group by virtue of what Allport (1954) calls 'ascription': by that he means that birth defines the individual or, in some cases by achievement one could conceivably move from one social group to another. This can become possible by acquiring a large sum of money, becoming bankrupt, or acquiring a disabling condition. Social group is defined herein as "a group of people who are identified as a group by themselves and by others because they have some characteristics or attributes in common with each other: race, gender, national origin, class, religion, or physical capabilities." Women, Blacks, Hispanics, Jews and Gentiles are some examples.

Social group membership carries with it a social and cultural learning process that shapes and molds our lives. Part of this process is learning that the social group status given to men is "dominant" and for women is "subordinate" (Miller, 1976; Kanter, 1977). The nature of this status is circumscribed according to certain roles women are expected to play in society. These predefined behavioral patterns or conditioning characteristics are part of the social structure. They are inherent in social institutions and contribute significantly to the unequal power relationships that distinguish dominants from subordinates (Kanter, 1977; Miller, 1967).

The terms "dominant" and "subordinate" in and of themselves do not begin to explain the distinctive and dynamic relationships which distinguish them from each other. Clarifications between these relationships will be discussed within the context of oppression for it is oppression, with its prescription of inherently unequal power relationships, which distinguishes dominants from subordinates.

Barry Adam's (1978) analyses of the dynamics of domination shed considerable light on both the inequitable nature of this relationship and its meaning. Adam explains that

the limitation of life possibilities is not equally experienced by all people. Domination arises in the differential distribution of life possibilities. Domination cannot be restricted to instances of open confrontation, commands or resistance: it lies in the structure of concrete alternatives open to individuals. The social cleavages among individuals subject to similar sets of life alternatives form the boundaries of social groups. Domination exists in the social structuring of life's limitations by which one group (the dominators) successfully maximizes its life chances by minimizing those of another (the dominated) (pp. 7-8).

Using Adam's framework, dominant groups are defined here as those social groups whose life chances or concrete alternatives are systematically maximized, making that group privileged in relation to and at the expense of subordinate groups.

Subordinate groups would necessarily constitute the inverse: those individuals who are punished by design because they are members of a social group that the dominant group has deemed inferior. Life chances or concrete alternatives for members of this group are systematically minimized (Adam, 1978).

An understanding of the major hurdles faced by Black women in the workplace necessitates an examination of the dynamics of White male dominance. White males in the United States occupy a position of power and, in doing so, have the greater influence in determining society's cultural outlook, its philosophy, morality, science, and social theory (Adam, 1978). Educational institutions, churches, the media, publishing industry, and other social agents serve as conduits of cultural conditioning by continually reproducing the beliefs and ideologies of the dominant group which act as the norm of the larger society (Adam, 1978).

According to Allport (1954), the norm set by the dominant group produces a knowledge base that not only determines the role and expectation of the dominant and subordinate groups but also introduces the inclusionary and exclusionary behavior on the part of the dominant group as to acceptability of individuals from other groups. The criteria of acceptability sets the dominant group aside from all other groups. By setting the norms and being in a position of power, dominants

are able to legitimize this unequal relationship and incorporate it into society's guiding concept (Miller, 1977). Anyone remaining inside that guiding concept was considered to be a part of the In Group; anyone remaining outside these concepts is seen as part of the Out Group (Allport, 1954). In this respect, In Group/Out Group operates at both ends of the continuum; dominants are seen as part of the In Group and subordinates as part of the Out Group. Both aspects of this continuum gain importance through the socialization process because we receive messages that to be part of the In Group is to be young, rich, education, healthy and White; and to be part of the Out Group is to be old, poor, uneducated, unhealthy and Black.

In the United States, the dominant group is made up of privileged White, able-bodied, heterosexual males who maintain a political, economical, and social position of influence and control over 90 percent of the social institutions (Fernandez, 1981). This condition can be largely attributed to their social group status and the length of time White males have occupied these positions. Being in this position has afforded the White male certain privileges that are not equally afforded to a subordinate group. When subordinates begin to ask for the same privileges as the White male, many Whites view these requests as a threat to their status and social position. Consequently, power struggles and competition ensue over access to scarce resources such as jobs, land, housing and education; therefore, it is not hard to gauge the potential impact the dominant group could have on the Black subordinate in terms of hiring and promotional practices, job assignments, and performance appraisals.

A research study conducted by Stevens (1984) examined the attitudes of younger men (potential future managers) with regards to being liberal minded in their attitudes towards Blacks in business. Their findings suggested two things: (1) 98 out of 100 cases found Whites will perceive the Black manager in a stereotypical manner; (2) the younger, more open-minded Whites entering organizations had no bearing on their perceptions of Blacks. The experienced manager with negative stereotypes would tend to be replaced by younger Whites who think similarly.

According to Young (1985) the maximized life chances, alternatives, and other privileges afforded men as dominants are salient in occupational domains. Though men as a social group essentially govern this key realm of life, their power and prevalence does not render them immune to some of the self-limiting philosophies and patterns that hamper women occupationally.

Noble (1978) insists that for males entering the workplace, the problems are individual while for women they are collective; so while males can also be hampered by internal struggles, conflicts and barriers, they are much more apt to fit organizational requirements because simply,

organizational life as we know it has been created by men: the economic structure of the country, its institutions, its processes, and its growth have been developed by men. Consequently, organizations are male culture-bound; having been built by men, they expect what men bring to them (Kosinar, 1981, p. 35).

According to Adams, the very imposition of the gender biases of White men permits them to be "the gate keepers" to social opportunities.

External Barriers (Stereotypes of Black Women)

Stereotypes for the most part are relatively rigid and oversimplified conceptions of a group taken over for a period of time and generalized to describe all members of that category (Memmi, 1965; King, 1982; Adams, 1978). The slightest behavior, real or perceived, that supports these assumptions is used against the minority group members. Whole sets of such characteristics in the minds of traditional White managers renders minorities, especially Blacks, less than well suited for influential positions (Fernandez, 1981). A major study of several large corporations found that the most frequently expressed negative racial attitude characterized Blacks as lazy, dumb or slow. It pointed out that often Whites were curt toward Blacks and would not give them the courtesy of an explanation because they assumed that Blacks were too dumb to learn (Fernandez, 1981).

While Whites have developed negative stereotypes to justify the exploitation of and discrimination against minorities, negative stereotypes are most common and resilient about Blacks and Blackness (King, 1982; Noble, 1966; Ladner, 1972). According to Fernandez (1981), "White society has never wanted to be Black." In America the old saying is, "An ounce of Black blood makes one Black." This adage applies to no other minority group. White and Asian is Eurasian. Hispanics were classified as Whites until 1970. At various times in the history of this country, Whites have taken "pride" in finding a little native-American blood in their family. Even though views of White Americans have varied from time to time toward other ethnic or racial

groups, their views toward Blacks have been consistently negative (Fernandez, 1981).

Black women belong to a social group that has been devaluated because their identity as a Black woman was directly related to the institution of slavery. Devaluation has been instrumental in influencing the psyches of all Americans. It has shaped the beliefs and attitudes of the larger society toward the values and virtues of the Black woman's social group status once slavery ended (Hooks, 1981).

The transition from slavery to emancipation did not improve the plight of the Black woman, because it carried with it all the trappings of an oppressive society. Like all rape victims in a patriarchal society, Black women were seen as having lost value and self-worth as a result of the humiliation they endured during transition (Hooks, 1981). The devaluation process of the Black woman created negative labels or characteristics rendering her as not desirable and without importance (Adams, 1978; Ladner, 1972; Hooks, 1981).

On an institutional level, if Black women are characterized as lazy, dumb, or slow, then the attitudes of White individuals would most likely be reflected in behavior exhibited toward them. According to Stevens (1984), "the individual's survival and success is at great risk when the attitudes of those making personnel decisions include stereotypes."

A descriptive study of factors influencing the professional mobility of Black female administrators in public education in Louisiana between 1952 and 1978 found that: (a) education and experience are significant determinants of upward mobility during early years of employment; (b) academic degrees in administration and supervision are significant

determinants of mobility; (c) the larger percentage of high-mobility respondents were single and the small percentage of high-mobility respondents were married with four or more children; and (d) nonability factors such as political affiliation, unwritten system policies, being female and Black were significant determinants for promotion at the higher levels of the educational hierarchy (Tyson, 1980).

Sex Role Socialization

According to Collins and Susswell (1986), it has always been a difficult undertaking when it comes to understanding and defining what it means to be African-American and female. Part of the dilemma lies within the Black woman experiencing the context of her African-American cultures within a predominantly White society. The down side of the phenomenon creates a dual conscious or bicultural perspective (Dubois, 1903) between the expectations of the African-American community and the larger society as to which one becomes the dominating force in the definition of her self.

According to Miller (1965), within each subordinate group there are tendencies for some members to imitate the dominants by developing enough of the qualities valued by the dominant group to be partially accepted into its fellowship.

Because of the historical presence of the Black woman in America, there has been an emergence of multiple self-referents because of the multiple roles she has played (Noble, 1986). Brown, Collins and Susswell identified three headings to examine these roles and chose to

subsume under these headings the following characteristics:

psychological referent; African-American referent, and myself referent.

Psychophysical Referent

Psychophysical referent pertains to the Black woman's knowledge of herself as a woman. According to Gilligan (1982), a woman's self-concept is intricately tied to her capacity to reproduce and to act as a mirror that reflects her relationship with her mother; therefore, the female sense of self is through attachment.

African-American Referent

The African-American self referent refers to the Black woman's self-conceptualization along two referents, one African and the other European. The African referent reflects the historical legacy of Africa, while the European reflects a history of slavery and living in a predominately White society (Noble, 1973). The duality of this consciousness not only requires the Black woman to balance the expectations from each culture but also to know and understand the norms and values of these cultural expectations.

Myself Referent

Myself referent refers to self-knowledge that is unique given one's personal history. The myself referent has two major components. The first pertains to that combination of cognitive experience that defines the Black woman; and the second refers to those aspects of self that

pertain only to the individual such as eye color, family history, health, etc. (Smith, 1983).

Formal and Informal Roles

For many Black women, growing up meant being socialized according to two conflicting roles, formal and informal (Noble, 1966). The informal role as told to Black women by their parents contained messages that refused to allow the dominant group to define their problems or solutions of their life experiences (Lourde, 1984; Noble, 1966) while the formal role contained messages of adopting and sometimes accepting the normative patterns as standards existing in the White middle-class society (Kanter, 1977). The concepts contained in the formalized messages became a powerful dominating force in shaping the values and traditions of the "American woman"--as the ideal homemaker, mother, lover and citizen. White women became the standard bearer for that which White men deemed desirable, equal to physical beauty with value and virtue (Morrison, 1970; Noble, 1966; Ladner, 1984).

The beliefs and attitudes regarding the role of the "American woman" carried with them a set of expectations coupled with predefined patterns or controlling characteristics appropriate in all facets of life: family, peers, the media, religion and education. Consequently, this became the only visible image or yardstick for other women to evaluate or measure their perceptions of themselves.

The cyclical nature of this process demonstrates itself in the early introduction and socialization of the very young. The younger the age

of the individual, the more typical the attitude toward his/her sex-role stereotyping (Ladner, 1972).

Barnett and Barauch's (1976) review of research in occupational aspirations and expectations of males and females found the following:

- (1) from a very early age, occupational choices are highly gender stereotypical;
- (2) girls select a less varied, more restricted range of occupations.

Regardless of socioeconomic class or race, girls are more specific and deliberate in their avoidance of high-prestige occupations. One-half to two-thirds of school age girls aspired to be either a teacher, nurse, or secretary.

A corollary to this study was a review of research conducted by Epstein (1973) regarding the success of 25 Black professional women. She contended that the same stereotypes attached to the so-called feminine mind, emotions or physiology may not seem easily transferable to Black women. On the same issues of education, career and marriage, the outcome of this study was significantly different than the study of Barnett and Barauch.

In terms of marriage, one-third of the women in the study reported that their parents did not push them toward marriage and the remaining two-thirds did not feel anxious about being unmarried.

On the subject of careers, all of the participants interviewed were not bound by conventional stereotyping of the professions "deemed suitable for a woman." Although Epstein's research shows that White women lawyers were deterred by parents from male-dominated occupations,

Black women reported their parents not only encouraged them, but suggested other male-dominated avenues. Finally, it was commonly believed (by all participants) that a great premium was placed on higher education. They felt that the Black women's education is considered a real investment in her future.

Several authors such as Cole and Jones (1985) and Boykin (1986) take a different approach. They feel that for many Black females, growing up meant being socialized into three realms of experiential negotiation: (1) the mainstream experience, (2) the minority experience, and (3) the Black cultural experience.

Mainstream participation is characteristic of all social classes because of their dependency on work, judicial, consumer and bureaucratic systems, both as clients and employer. These systems become shared values transmitted by the culture of the larger society and reinforced by the media.

The minority experience is based on exposure to social, economic and political oppression. This exposure produces adaptive and compensatory reactions, social perspectives and defensive postures that help one to cope with the predicament created by oppressive forces.

Finally, the Black cultural experience is rooted in traditional African ethos which creates a culturally indigenous base from which African-Americans interpret and negotiate their social realities. It is not difficult to understand from this viewpoint the incompatible nature of the cultural system and to question which one becomes the dominating force in the socialization of Black women.

Internal Barriers

Within the context of the larger society, there are consequences to the combined messages (informal and formal) regarding the Black woman's perceptions of control over her life experiences. If she chooses to accept the dominant view and conform to White middle-class standards, she may develop passive acceptance personality typical of Blacks living in a racist society (Jackson, 1980). In this respect, Black women receive these messages unconsciously and behave in ways that deny differences exist. At this level, Black women do not see their collusion and subsequent internalization. In addition, Black women may develop a condition of "marginality," a term first coined by Stone in 1935. The term "marginal man" was used to describe individuals who exist on the margin of two different cultural traditions but are not fully accommodated to either.

Within the larger culture, the roles and actions of the Black woman were defined differently than for the White woman. Historically, White women have been characterized as passive and submissive, traits associated with White middle-class women; while the Black woman has been characterized as forward, outgoing and aggressive, which are definitely not traits associated with the "American woman" (Staples, 1974; Noble, 1966).

Even if the White woman chooses a career other than that of housewife, the projection of her new image must remain within the bounds of femininity. The cultural image of the Black woman in America is that of a dominating type--she who rules the family, her husband included.

She is seen as a masculine female who must be subordinate in order that the Black male may take his rightful place in society.

Moynihan's published report (1965) on the Black family contained all the messages of a matriarchal myth, designed to urge Black women to be more submissive. Moynihan argued that "In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which was out of line with the rest of the American society."

Being exposed to the norms and standards of the dominant group for such a long time, the Black woman on an unconscious level may buy into the ideology about herself and other Black women, which results in an unconscious understanding and acceptance of the dominant group and a lesser understanding and acceptance of herself. The self-limiting philosophy and behavior may act as an internal barrier to the liberalization of herself by not paying attention to those voices they have been taught to distrust--themselves.

In conclusion, the description and definition of the Black woman's life experience are framed according to the beliefs and ideologies set forth by members of the dominant group. Gender differences within the respective groups exist because of race as it relates to perceptions of social group status and the ways each group has been socialized. The socialization process teaches both subordinates and dominants the values and attitudes appropriate for each role and the idea of "place."

The effects of sex-role stereotyping and its socialization process on Black women do not constitute a strong countervailing force. There are differences to the extent to which success and its perceptions are measured and, not necessarily, on the basis of one's role but due to the

Black woman's experience in America. This socialization process may cause limitations to the occupational achievement of the Black woman in the workplace.

Section Two

Social Institution and Institutional Practices

Understanding the source of external barriers to Black women's occupational achievements necessitates an examination of social institutions in the United States because of the hegemonic nature of this country.

Hegemony exists when a set of ideologies dominates and excludes other ways of seeing and thinking about the world. It is usually expressed and supported by norms, perceptions (internalized by other classes) and institutions (churches, schools, businesses, and industry media, medicine, law, psychology, etc.). These ideologies are either assumed to be the "correct way" or the "only way" to view the world and organize our lives (Blauner, 1972; King, 1982).

Most of our institutions are based on these three ideologies: hierarchy, patriarchy and competition. All three act as vehicles for transmitting and maintaining the culture of the larger society. They they enforce inequality and give oppression its power and depth (Adams, 1978; Allport, 1958).

The following section will examine each of these ideologies in terms of their contributions to the external barriers to Black women in the workplace.

Hierarchy

Historically, the concept of hierarchy in this country has always played a significant role in maintaining a position of power and leadership for members of the dominant social group by top-down control. Access to power in modern organizations comes exclusively through managerial positions.

Memmi concludes that under hierarchy all people are not equal; neither do they have equal rights nor opportunity (Memmi, 1965). Research by several other authors (Epstein, 1973; Nelson, 1975; Kanter, 1977) found White men predominantly concentrated at the top of the hierarchical ladder in relationship to women, who by role and function are concentrated at lower rungs of the ladder; Black women, in comparison, are usually found at the very bottom.

During the 1960s, to counter widespread criticism of discrimination and attempt to ascribe to the demands of affirmative action, many American companies hired Black executives, put them on display, invited them to public meetings and then soon forgot them.

In the 1970s, however, Blacks who had a place in corporate America found that they had gone as far as they could go. One way or another, "the Blacks had reached an invisible ceiling" as Richard Clarke (1980), a prominent New York recruiter, put it. "It usually occurred at the department head level or slightly under it. An assistant district manager or 'assistant brands manager' was likely to stay that way, rather than move in on the district or brands manager," he said.

In 1971, nearly half of employed Black women who worked during 1971, worked as household domestics or in service occupations. Only one in ten had a professional position (Epstein, 1973; Lerner, 1973).

According to Scott and Hardy (1979), people at the top of the hierarchical ladder (significant people) accept the norms and expectations of role performances, while insignificant people who depend on organizations for their livelihood are at the bottom.

Members of the dominant group tend to say that this is the way of all our institutions. Their acceptance is proof that institutions ought to be this way (Adams, 1978). This circular logic justifies and ensures the positions that those who are on the top will remain there at the expense of those who are not (Goldenberg, 1978). Because most men in charge are White, power tends to stay in their hands, thereby strengthening the external barriers against Black women.

Patriarchy

Men of all races in America bond on the basis of their common belief that patriarchal social order is the only viable foundation for society (Hooks, 1981; King, 1982).

Under patriarchy, men are arbitrators of identity for both males and females, because the cultural norm of human identity is by definition male identity, masculinity and under patriarchy the cultural norms of male identity consist in power, prestige, prerogative and privilege as over and against the gender class of women (Stollengerby, 1981).

Social institutions as an expression of patriarchy operate as a kind of conceptual prison, producing and reproducing organizational

structures that give dominance to males and traditional male values (Morgan, 1986).

As vehicles for transmitting and maintaining culture, social institutions take on the value and ideologies of the larger society that form the context for social institutions. They reinforce, mirror and perpetuate the concepts and core values that lie at the foundation of the society they represent (Goldenberg, 1978; Adams, 1978).

Historically, the description of the Black female has always been written and framed largely through the eyes of White historians according to the beliefs, attitudes and behavioral roles as set forth by the dominant group. This information was based on misinformation, and misconceptions of Black women with a self-contained notion of an appropriate place (Doyle, 1969; Ladner, 1972; Lourde, 1984; Hooks, 1981).

According to Adams (1978) and Miller (1967), subordinates/Black women are usually said to be unstable to perform the preferred roles. Their incapacibilities are ascribed to as innate deficiencies of mind or body; they are immutable and impossible of change or development.

The major assignment for Blacks (women included) has always been that of entertainment as vaudeville comics, singers, dancers, musicians or athletes. They can make people cry or laugh or wonder at their exploits; however, they are not to make people think or question their lives, because the role of intellectuals, cultural critics, creator and political statesman are out of place (Blauner, 1972, p. 39).

According to Barmash (1980), women have been treated like "kittens" and Blacks like "clowns" in corporate America.

Blacks have been allowed to 'perform,' to show their bags of tricks, one of which is to behave like a real White executive and by their presence demonstrate the truly liberal inclination of

their employer and also his obedience to the law of the land. . . . Clowns are fine, of course, like fun and games, but you wouldn't invite one to sit in the boxes with you or take one home (Barmash, 1980, p. 67).

"The inability to act, to decide, to think, subjects subordinates (Black women) to a limited range of opportunities that require high-level positions, responsibilities and economic status" (Miller, 1967, p. 97).

Competition as a Determination of Success

Americans are familiar with statements such as "the American way," "the American dream," or "living and working in the mainstream of America." These statements are cultural symbols that reflect a certain way of life; they are at the basis of how we view material goods, physical safety, and peace of mind. Individuals adapt to these values through institutions that contribute to the transformation of American values. Scott and Hardy (1979) refer to this adaptation as the "Organization Imperative." This imperative is based upon a primary proposition of absolute; whatever is good for the individual can come only from the organization.

The major force of this transformation is the assumption that the only way to achieve anything of significance is through the modern organization; and, if it comes from the organization, it must have value. Goldenberg states that "one's ultimate worth as a human being (at least, in societal terms) is justified with respect to the degree to which one is perceived as both mirroring and obtaining these values of the organization" (Goldenberg, 1978, p. 70). In social institutions,

like business, education, law and medicine, women must compete to survive in the system. What does one compete for in life? One compete vigorously in sports, education, jobs, homes, recognition and scientific achievement. One honors "best sellers" in all domains, and our world of entertainment is dominated by "stars"--a system in which some shine more brightly than others. People are divided into winners and losers and logically, the system works toward such allocations (Yankelovich, 1981; Terkel, 1972).

Since the dominant group is responsible for the distribution of goods and power, survival depends on getting access to them (Memmi, 1965; Goldenberg, 1978). "The values that people seek are never distributed equally. In the struggle for subsistence and social rewards, there are always obstacles that impede some groups more than others" (Blauner, 1972, p. 221). One obstacle that impedes some groups more than others is the dualistic expectation of succeed/fail, pass/fail, win/lose mentalities that force people to depend on someone else's failure for their own gain. Since resources and opportunities are limited, survival depends on getting access to them. The act of duality pits people against one another, which ensures that no one subordinate group will ever achieve enough success to threaten the dominant position at the top.

According to Goldenberg, the dilemma that competition poses to the subordinate group is quite different than for members of the dominant group, because of their social group status and position in society.

In terms of jobs, Blacks do not have the same resources or equal access to opportunities that provide pivotal head starts for members of

the dominant group (Goldenberg, 1978). A qualified person's chances for employment in the most desirable job opening begins with finding out about these vacancies and becoming part of a pool of candidates (Braddock and McPartland, 1987). Keeping access and availability of job opportunities out of reach of subordinates (Goldenberg, 1978) is achieved by passing the opportunity to members of the same social group, i.e., their immediate offspring, friends, classmates, etc. (Memmi, 1965). When limits are placed on access to certain resources are denied to the oppressed, this situation ensures economic dependence and limitation (Goldenberg, 1978).

Goldenberg (1978) identified four particular structures in which all forms of oppression express themselves in the workplace in terms of limiting equal accessibility to the individual's occupational achievement; namely, containment, compartmentalization, expendability, and ideology. "These particular structures determine the ease or difficulty with which individuals negotiate their passage through the system" (Goldenberg, 1978, p. 173).

Structural Limitations

Containment. This structure limits the range of free movement, either psychological or physical, available to a particular group. The primary function is to increasingly restrict and narrow the scope of possibilities that can be entertained.

DATA: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 107,000 or two percent of all Black women who work are classified as managers. The same statistics show that 25 percent of all Black managers (particularly women) work in personnel or public relations.

According to the U. S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, the distribution of civilian labor for Black and White women fell into the following categories:

Black Women		White Women
6%	Executive Administrators and Managerial	9%
14%	Professional	21%
4%	Technical	4%
33%	Administrative Support including clerical	32%
5%	Sales	9%
18%	Service	13%
17%	Laborers and Operators	9%

Bernice Powell, President of the Coalition of 100 Black Women, states that

the majority of positions relegated to Black females such as public relations or community affairs are seen as minority related areas because once in, it is difficult to move into line positions, where technical skills and degrees are required (Simpson, 1981, p. 85).

According to Karen Johnson, "These are pink collar areas" with no upward mobility. These positions do not have power and influence in the organization, and they do not pay anywhere near what the technical jobs pay (Black Enterprise, 1981).

Job segregation limits the overwhelming majority of female workers to certain (usually lower paying) job classifications. Female factory and service workers are frequently employed in light manufacturing, food processing, meat packing, textiles, and the culinary trades. Female

physicians as disproportionately represented in pediatrics, and female lawyers are relegated to family law and "estates and trusts." As one female lawyer put it, ". . . they tell us we're good at working with widows and orphans" (Aptheker, 1982, p. 80).

Expendability. This structure creates the kind of devaluation of personal importance that results in no distinction between the individual or the job. Jobs that are insignificant or devaluated tend to be slated for certain groups. The lower stratum of the working class tends to be concentrated in jobs that are unsecured, unskilled, and at the bottom of the hierarchy of authority (Blauner, 1972).

DATA: According to Conrad, it has been an historical pattern that Black women tend to be concentrated in occupations where substitutions for their labor are readily available.

In 1980, the federal government passed legislation introducing a system designed to reduce the escalating cost of medicare. This system is known as D.R.G. (Diagnostic Related Groups). Prior to the passing of this bill, patients had unlimited hospital days during which they could be treated for certain conditions. The passing of this bill gave the government the responsibility to pay for only a limited number of hospital days and any additional days would be the financial responsibility of the hospital. Economic hardship was the cry of many hospitals. Consequently, the administrative staff looked for ways of maintaining a profit margin. Since nursing makes up 60 percent of any hospital budget, this seemed the most obvious area to cut.

Within the Department of Nursing a hierarchical structure exists, consisting of three levels. The first is made up of significant people

(i.e., administrative staff, Director of Nursing, and supervisory personnel). The second level consists of middle management (i.e., head nurses, charge nurses and educators). Finally, the third level is made up of nurses' aides and technicians which proportionally consisted of Black females. It was not uncommon in financially difficult times to lay off technicians and nurses' aides. Their responsibilities were absorbed by the rest of the nursing staff.

DATA: A study conducted in a laboratory setting revealed that subjective ratings often played a significant role in the selection and promotion of personnel as well as in their subsequent performance evaluation. The data presented suggested that ratings of Black females may be adversely affected by the sex and race of the other members of their group on variables such as forcefulness, communication skills, etc. Peer rating found some tendencies for raters to give higher ratings to members of their own race than to those of other races (Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 62, pp. 26-264, June 1977).

This study is particularly useful in demonstrating and understanding the far-reaching implications of sex-role stereotypes and the influence it has in the assessment of behavior in a workplace setting, in light of the fact that objective measures could have been defined.

Ideology. This structure shapes and controls our responses to events that impinge themselves upon our consciousness. It is an overarching interpretive scheme to hold other structures--containment, expendability, and compartmentalization--in place.

DATA: The scheme used for this structure is the doctrine of personal culpability. Its purpose is to both encourage and predispose individuals to interpret their shortcomings or failures as evidence of some basically uncontrollable and perhaps unchangeable personal deficit (Goldenberg, 1978).

Attribution theory has been proposed to develop explanations of how people are judged according to the meaning and interpretation of a given behavior (Robbins, 1986).

The theory suggests that the observation of an individual's behavior is either internally or externally caused. Internally caused behavior speaks to the individual being in control, while externally caused behavior addresses causes that are outside the control of the individual (Robbins, 1986).

Derald Wing Sue (1975) contends that our cultural upbringing and life experiences frequently determine or influence our world view and, consequently, constitutes our psychological orientation with life and can determine "how we think, behave, make decisions and define events" (Sue, 1975, p. 458).

"For minorities in the United States, a strong determinant of world view is closely linked to racism and the subordinate position assigned minorities in society" (Hall, Cross and Freedle, 1972; Jackson, 1975; Sue, 1975).

Sue (1975) developed a conceptual model to demonstrate two psychological dimensions as a tool to understand people with different viewpoints; namely, locus of control and locus of responsibility.

Locus of control addresses two psychological orientations in life, internal and external control. Individuals with internal control believe that reinforcements are contingent on their own actions. Individuals who possess a high degree of internal control tend to be associated with greater job efficiency, higher need achievement, greater expression of satisfaction with life, lower anxiety, and a greater

willingness to accept responsibility for their own actions. "These attributes are highly imbued by Western society and constitute the core characteristics of good mental health" (Sue, 1975, p. 461).

Individuals with external control believe that reinforcements are not entirely contingent on their own actions, but are the result of chance, fate or powerful others.

Gurin (1969) and Mirels (1970) in their studies indicate that the presence of political forces tend to create barriers to equal opportunity and equal access for lower class individuals. Consequently, many of these individuals may be realistically seeing a discrepancy between their ability and attainment.

In Western society, biological and social sciences have always played a major role in shaping the beliefs and attitudes of the larger society toward the inferiority of the Black women as being inherent (Adams, 1978). This ideology became institutionalized and is played back accordingly. According to many Black women, "we have all the credentials in the world, but that doesn't qualify us in the minds of many White people. They still think of us as inferior, thus unqualified" (James, 1984, p. 201).

The other side of the discussion involves the individual or blaming the individual in order to deflect the blame away from the institutions. In effect, blaming the "victim."

Black people have always heard "pulling one's self up by his own boot straps," is a sure "shoe-in"; believing that they are responsible for their own development and destiny, many Black females sought after this ideal. What many of them found out was that the pursuit of one's

dream through self-development was illusive when placed in the hands and control of the dominant group.

A study conducted in industrial sectors, both regional and metropolitan, demonstrated that breakthroughs into employment do not necessarily lead to the achievement of racial equality. Disaggregation of national data suggests continuity rather than change in racial economic inequality. This study was particularly significant in light of Black schooling attainment, cultural and political changes, changes in government policies relative to racial discrimination (American Economic Review, May 1980).

In conclusion, "those who run the bureaucratic organizations often rely on outward appearances to determine who is the right sort of person, because to be compatible with the top men is to act like them, to look like them, to think like them, to be one of them" (Kanter, 1977).

Barmash (1980) speaks to the "comfort index" of many companies characterized by the C.E.O. who sets the corporate style for the firm. The comfort index involves the assembling of a team upon which the C.E.O. can depend on loyalty, smooth one-to-one relationships without traumatic difficulties. According to Barmash, "for women and Blacks to fit into that index is not impossible, it just is not possible, because they do not fit their superior's team concept in age, religion, sex, race, school, social outlook, recreational preferences, and general chemistry." Any combination of three or four of the above makes one acceptable. Any larger combination is a shoe-in.

Black women carry the dual stigma of being female and Black in a society that devalues both. They become doubly invisible and susceptible to a limited range of occupational achievements. Their interaction with the dominant social group that controls social institutions has been posited as a principal factor contributing to external barriers of Black women in the workplace (Noble, 1978; Hooks, 1981; Washington, 1987).

The adverse effects of this process are highlighted by three contemporary Black social scientists: Ladner (1971), Beal (1970). and Reid (1975). They discuss the concept of double jeopardy in terms of the Black women being victimized by race and sex. These researchers feel that the separation between the two terms is often blurred in determining which produces the most adverse effect.

For example, Black Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm has publicly declared that she experiences more victimization because of sex than race. On the other hand, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Patricia Harris stated she has experienced more because of her race.

Both women are exceptions rather than the rule when compared to women in blue collar work, underemployed and unemployed. There appears to be an implicit assumption from these authors that socioeconomics becomes an important variable to consider as inextricably linked to race and sex. Hence, we witness the phenomena of triple jeopardy.

Sizemore (1970) developed a pedagogical paradigm entitled "Maleness, Whiteness and money." The paradigm was designed to illustrate some features held by various individuals that others do not possess. She assigned positive points to individuals based on their possession of

these characteristics. Components of the design appear below.

	Maleness	Whiteness	Money
Rich White male	+	+	+
White male	+	+	-
Rich Black male	+	-	+
Black male	+	-	-
Rich White female	-	+	+
White female	-	+	-
Rich Black female	-	-	+
Black female	-	-	-

Consequently, the interactive effects of sexism, racism, and economic oppression place Black women in America in triple jeopardy, and the most realistic perceptions for analyzing their position and quality of life in America.

Section Three

Internalization

The beliefs and ideologies of Black women have historically and systematically kept them in a powerless position and denied them any meaningful input and participation into society at large. This process in many respects has led Black women to the act of "buying into" these norms as standards from which to see themselves and conduct their lives. Attempting to seek success within the context of the White middle-class standards gives legitimacy to the White culture, its norms, values, belief system and repressive social institutions.

As was stated in Section One, the beliefs and acceptance of our accumulate over time; and, in the absence of information, or through

misinformation and absorption of someone else's fears, experiences separate Black women from themselves and from their own voices.

Listening to the formal messages of someone else and then acting on them places Black women in the position of colluding in their own oppression by not distinguishing and separating out that which is theirs and that which belongs to themselves. This type of conditioning also forces Black women into playing the role of victim and agent. "They won't let me do it" or "they are always holding me back" are expressions that indicate one has no input into her own reality. The silence of these expressions keeps and maintains the cycle of oppression.

"Enmeshed in our own silence of not having the right to our own words and power to be heard we create a sense of our own justice that is distorted" (Lourde, 1984, p. 32). According to Lourde (1984),

. . . we have to believe over and over again, that which is most important to us as Black women, must be spoken, made verbal and shared even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self revelation (Lourde, 1984, p. 42).

Colluding behavior by Black women is disturbing yet understandable based on the following:

- (1) Given the longevity of oppression in this country and the degree Black women have been socialized to believe in the process. Memmi points out, "the longer oppression lasts, the more profoundly it affects its victims, adding that acceptance on the part of subordinates is the crowning point of oppression" (Memmi, 1965, p. 322).

- (2) In a capitalistic society, the pressure to conform to the standards is strong because the economic factor of keeping a job tends to threaten the survival of those who do not "obey." This economic factor gives strength to oppression by maintaining rigid guidelines that dictate what one may and may not do, behave and believe. Black women often internalize what is being said about them and form attitudes about themselves based on the same faulty information that dominants get.
- (3) Finally, concerns and issues of Black women are rarely discussed in current events, i.e., media, literature, or magazines. No explicit messages are shared by educators to recognize differences. Educators do not tell Blacks about themselves, and they do not tell Whites about Blacks--thereby making it impossible to see differences, problems, and pitfalls that constrict the reality of Black women (Cheeks, 1976; Lourde, 1972).

Collusion has often been both a necessary and functional cause for Black women or as Adams (1978) explains:

Socially structured life constraints elicit behavior which adjusts, accommodates, or subordinates itself to adverse situations in the interest of survival (p. 92).

Current Perspectives

Based on literature indicating that such factors as race, sex and national origin appear more likely to be constraints to occupational achievement, Leinster (1988) contends that there continues to be a debate regarding an incomplete and discouraging story, primarily because

only a few studies keep track of Blacks in organizations, and there does not appear to be agreement on these studies.

Robert Beck, a White executive vice president at Bank America, states, "getting Blacks at higher level positions in the corporations is not a "social issue" or a "moral issue. It's a business priority." Too few Blacks are qualified for these positions by virtue of education: digressive business administration, engineering and hard science. As a result, to fulfill the requirements of the affirmative action plan, well-meaning companies often hire Blacks to fill staff positions. In today's era of restructuring, these positions are usually the last hired, and first fired by many companies.

In terms of education, the U.S. Department of Education reports that in 1985 Blacks earned only some three percent of the doctor's, master's or bachelor's degrees in engineering, computer programming, and the hard sciences. This percentage is essentially unchanged from 1977. The leading schools, Stanford, M.I.T., Sloan and University of Chicago, all report a decrease (between three and four percent) in the graduating classes from 1977 to 1987.

Barry Rand, President of Xerox USA for office supplies, key sales and service division, attributes the problem to racism and discrimination. According to Rand, "Even though racism and discrimination exist in at least some departments at many, if not most, I can't afford to dwell on it. If I did, I'd go crazy."

This view is also held by other Blacks such as David Keans, Xerox's chief executive; John Akers, chief executive at IBM; Gary Jefferson, a vice president of United Airlines; and Dixie Herman, president of

Godfather Pizza. Brenda Neal, senior vice president at Drexel Burnham Lambert, feels that racism and discrimination are facts of life, and anybody who is Black and has a job in America has encountered racism in some form.

Edward Jones, Jr., a 20-year veteran of AT&T (who runs his own consulting business), conducted two surveys between 1985 and 1986. The findings of the first survey of 70 Black executives earning more than \$100,000 a year overwhelmingly (95 percent) thought their advance had been hindered because of race. In a second survey of 305 Black alumni of five top business schools, James found that 84 percent of the respondents felt that race had hurt their ratings, pay assignments, recognition, appraisals and promotions. Says James, "Some 98 percent agreed with the statement that subtle prejudices pervade their own companies and more than half said that prejudice is overt."

In conclusion, the fact that Black women experience different and unequal realities stemming from their repetitive social group membership is considered to have a fundamental effect on their occupational achievements, attitudes, behaviors and experiences. Furthermore, the subordinate status of Black women severely curtails their ability to function effectively with White males in those realms of employment that are male defined and dominated.

The interaction between sexism, social group status and the condition of Black women occupationally is at best complex and multifaceted. For practical purposes, the examination of this relationship can only be conducted in a cursory fashion. Furthermore,

these issues deemed more central to the external barriers to Black women's occupational achievement were gleaned from the literature.

The following topics and issues were presented in this overview: the dynamics of dominate and subordinate social group status, differences between external and internal obstacles for Black women; the role organizations play on limiting the occupational achievements of Black women, and the internalization of the nature of collusion and current perspectives.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Methodology

This chapter will describe the design and methods used in this study along with the rationale and theoretical basis of this methodology. Next, the process of participant selection will be outlined. The style and content of the interview will be reviewed, including a discussion of some of the issues Black researchers have in doing a Black study. Finally, the procedures for data analysis and ways of establishing trustworthiness and accountability will be described.

The use of the qualitative method is an integral part of this study. The naturalist or qualitative paradigm maintains that inquiry is value bound, "specifically, that it is influenced by the values of the inquirer, by the axioms or assumptions underlying both substantive theory and inquiry and by the values that characterize the context in which the inquiry is carried out" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 161).

The naturalist paradigm assumes that the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable, that realities are multiple and constructed, and that meaning must be considered in context. Qualitative methods and inductive analyses are more adaptable in dealing with and identifying multiple realities and contextual factors (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The result of inductive analysis is "grounded theory" (Glasser and Strause, 1967), a theory that follows from the data rather than preceding them. This is echoed by Murray and Scott in their discussion of the Black female experience in America: "To solicit and present research reflective of the diversity and commonalities of the

Black female experience, in order to broaden the field of understanding in terms of human behavior" (1982, p. 259).

A qualitative approach to data collection and analysis seemed appropriate to support this study because the central agenda is to understand the experience of Black women. A study that allows people to make sense of their lives is what qualitative researchers call "participant perspective" because it provides a better understanding of the perspective and construction of the subjects (Patton, 1980). Consequently, qualitative research tends to analyze data inductively, thereby building in relation to the particulars that have been gathered or grouped together in order to gain insight into the problem (Patton, 1980).

One of the features of qualitative research is the ability of the investigator to integrate diverse pieces of information into a unified interpretation (Dean, 1954; Seltiz, et al., 1976).

Triangulation, meaning the use of multiple sources of data collections (Denzin, 1978), was also used. Four basic types of triangulation have been identified by Denzin (1978): (1) data triangulation, (2) investigator triangulation, (3) theoretical triangulation, and (4) methodological triangulation. In addition, triangulation may be achieved by a mix of these four types. This study used both data triangulation and researcher triangulation.

Data triangulation was obtained by cross validating data derived and categorized from the literature with the data collected from the interviews. Both data sources, the literature and the interviews, were submitted to researcher triangulation. Two independent pilot testers

evaluated the questionnaire which was derived from the literature. In addition, two independent coders cross-coded a random sample of the interview tapes to determine the accuracy of researcher paraphrasing and selection of quotes. These same two coders served to employ yet another method of validation, i.e., analyst triangulation (Patton, 1980).

Analyst triangulation involves two or more persons independently analyzing the same set of data and then meeting with each other and the researcher to compare their findings.

Research Assumptions

The research design was based on a series of assumptions about the problem and some effective ways to address it. These are:

- (1) The cultural ideologies and social values of the larger society contribute to the external barriers of Black women's occupational achievement in the workplace; consequently, increased awareness of the dynamics of these external barriers is a necessary step toward their alleviation.
- (2) Social institutions validate and perpetuate the beliefs and attitudes of the larger society by determining the ease or difficulty with which individuals negotiate their passage through the system (Goldenberg, 1978).
- (3) The current social structure of social institutions continues to have an impact on the occupational achievements of Black women by determining their role in the workplace.
- (4) Lastly, the experiences and perceptions of Black women in the workplace from different social institutions can further the cause

of education and foster learning by contributing meaningful information from their particular world view.

Research Objectives

Based on the research assumptions, the objectives are to:

- (1) Review and critique literature addressing cultural ideologies and institutional practices which contribute to impeding Black women's occupational achievements.
- (2) Glean from the literature ideas and expressions that will systematically be used in the arrangement of a questionnaire and an interview guide to elicit information from subjects as to the nature of Black women's external barriers to their occupational achievement.
- (3) Interview 15 Black women working in five major work categories, i.e., media, television, health care, private and public institutions, and education. These social institutions are predominantly White.
- (4) Combine the data gathered from the literature and the perceptions of Black women in order to suggest external barriers to Black women's occupational achievements.

Research Activities and Design

Based on the above assumptions, the following research activities serve to describe the design. The investigator:

- (1) Reviewed and critiqued literature addressing ideology, attitudes,

and behaviors typically reported to be exhibited by women which may impede occupational achievement.

- (2) Developed an interview guide to elicit information from subjects as to the nature of women's external barriers to occupational achievement.
- (3) Pilot tested the interview guide.
- (4) Designed a questionnaire to determine the participant's background and experience with this issue.
- (5) Interviewed 15 Black women who worked in predominantly White organizations in five major work categories as to their experience and insight on these barriers.
- (6) Combined the data gathered from both the literature and participants in order to describe some of the external barriers to women's occupational barriers.

Selection of the Participants

Participants were selected through random sampling (Sellitz, 1959). Participants were chosen on the basis of certain criteria with no attempt to randomize the population. The criteria for selection were:

- (1) Self-identified Black women of predominantly African descent.
- (2) At least 30 years old.
- (3) Born and raised in the United States.
- (4) Willing to participate in the study.
- (5) Minimum of four years of college.

A diverse group of Black women was sought in order to represent five major work categories: health care, media, television, education, and private and public institutions. Based on the above criteria, 15 Black women were selected to participate in the study. They range in age from 33 to 58. Four of the women are married, four are single, one is widowed, five are divorced, and one is separated. Five of the Black women have Bachelor's Degrees, seven have Masters of Science Degrees, one has a Master of Science equivalent, one has two Masters Degrees, and one has a Doctorate Degree.

Their salaries range from \$29,000 to \$74,000. They are all currently living in the New England area with the exception of four who reside in Washington, D.C. and two in Hartford, Connecticut. Half of the women were employed at the organizational level as middle managers and the other half as managerial specialists. They were involved in a range of occupations which included the following: associate producer for a local television station, producer and host of a half-hour weekly television program, engineer for a large manufacturing company, senior analyst for the federal government, journalist for a large metropolitan newspaper, assistant to a vice chancellor for student affairs, director of a minority program, coordinator for student activities, discharge planner for a large metropolitan hospital, utilization review coordinator for a large metropolitan hospital, and program coordinator for a division of the federal government. A summary of some demographic features of the participant can be found in Table I. Pseudonyms have been used.

TABLE 1
SOCIAL PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Type of Organization</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u># of Dependents</u>	<u>Years in Organization</u>	<u># of Promotions</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Clair	Public	50	BS	Married	1	18	3	\$65,000
Dawn	Public	40	MS	Single	0	18	1	\$49,000
Joyce	Public	58	MS X 2	Divorced	2	13	0	\$65,000
Phyllis	Media	Not Given	MS	Divorced	3	18	2	\$55,000
Edith	Education	41	MS X 2	Single	0	3.2	0	\$38,000
Lillian	Private	41	MS	Single	0	4	1	\$40,000
Virginia	Media	33	BS	Married	0	3.5	0	\$56,000
Anita	Media	35	BS	Single	0	9	2	\$52,000
Avis	Private	50	MS Equiv.	Divorced	3	16.5	3	\$74,000
Olive	Education	40	MS	Divorced	0	16	0	>\$65,000
Roberta	Health Care	45	BSN (1992)	Divorced	1	9	2	\$50,000
Henrietta	Health Care	49	B0G	Separated	1	11	1	\$47,000
Frances	Education	38	BS	Married	0	13	0	\$29,000
Susan	Health Care	53	PhD	Married	0	20	3	\$42,000
Barbara	Private	41	MS	Widowed	0	8	5	\$48,000

Interview Questions

Interview questions emerged out of the pertinent literature (See Appendix for the full text of the interview questions.). The researcher drew from existing research study theories and case studies relevant to occupationally related external barriers Black women face in order to develop categories of questions.

The interview questions were pilot tested on two participants considered knowledgeable on the topic. Revisions were made based on suggestions made by the pilot testers which, on the whole, involved simple rewording of some questions for the sake of clarity and brevity. At the end of each interview, participants were asked their reactions to the interview experience. All the participants felt comfortable with the style and content of the interview. None of the participants contacted me after the interview with any afterthoughts or concerns.

Thus, the interview guide contained a total of 15 questions in three broad areas considered by the literature and the researcher to be relevant: (1) professional background, (2) organization environment, and (3) recommendations and coping strategies.

Procedures

Participants were contacted initially by telephone in order to explain the nature and purpose of the research and to ascertain both their appropriateness for the study as well as their availability. Interested subjects were then mailed a description of the research, the appropriate human subject's consent forms, and the questionnaire. Subjects were to return the signed consent forms and the completed

questionnaire two weeks from the date received. Once these were received, telephone calls were made to arrange interviews.

The interviews were held at a time and place convenient for the participants. This was usually at their homes or workplaces. One participant was interviewed at her religious convention for the convenience of time. The interviews lasted approximately one and one-half hours and were audiotape recorded.

Many of the Black women became very excited and tense reliving their experiences through certain questions. There was an emotional demonstration from all of them at the end of the interview in terms of the interview providing a mechanism for the release of their pent-up anger and frustration. Some of the comments made included, "Boy, did that feel good", "This should have taken place with me a long time ago" and finally, "I guess I need to let that out." After the interview, participants completed a background questionnaire which requested information about their age, education, marital status, number of dependents, length in the organization, salary, and number of promotions in their current organization.

Issues of Black Interviewer with Black Participants

Several concerns are raised when doing research from a Black perspective. While there are advantages to having a Black interviewer in terms of gender, race and language, there could be potential drawbacks to the study from the standpoint of the researcher. Being aware of my own working experience around issues of external barriers and being part of a group that may have similar experiences, the

possibility of not being able to maintain a professional distance existed. Sometimes, when we are part of a group that has similar experiences, it is more difficult to see or reflect on the other individual's conceptual constructs, perceptions, and values. In hoping to make theirs come in line with your own, the temptation for distortion exists.

For many years, I have been involved with issues of human relations, both in and out of academic settings. I have participated in and led groups on issues of oppression. The process has provided me with sufficient sensitivity, integrity, and appreciation to accurately hear a voice other than my own and, at the same time, to observe the uniqueness of another individual. Therefore, I felt I had sufficient qualifications to undertake this study.

There are several ways I tried to address these concerns. First, qualitative methodology was chosen to allow the Black women to speak for themselves, thereby minimizing the distortion of their voices. As evidenced in the dearth of research, most Black women have not had the opportunity to speak.

Second, establishing a rapport of honesty and trust is critical to ensure honesty and openness. On the other hand, participants can be concerned about "pleasing the interviewer" and providing the "correct answer." I continuously stressed my interest in hearing about their experiences and perceptions and assured them that there was no "right way" to answer the questions. The questions were designed to encourage their own thinking and their own stories.

Third, I refrained from sharing the title of the dissertation until after the interview; and fourth, the accuracy of the construction of the information was checked by two independent coders.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was a short questionnaire and an interview guide designed and field tested by the investigator and then administered to the participants.

Questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic information about the participant's background. Gathering data of this nature was an efficient and expedient method, allowing the researcher to use the interview session to gather more substantive information. Answers to these questions helped the researcher locate the participants in relation to other participants being interviewed.

Questions in the category of Demographics of Population asked for information as to:

- Name
- Address
- Age
- Educational Level
- Marital Status (single, married, divorced, separated)
- Number of Dependents
- Salary Range (\$35,000-\$45,000; \$45,000-\$55,000; \$55,000 and above)
- Length of Time in Your Present Capacity
- Length of Time in the Organization
- How Many Promotions During This Period of Time

Research Population. The research population for this study was 15 professional Black women who occupy a managerial position in the workplace. Potential subjects were identified through existing contacts the researcher had developed within Boston and Amherst, Massachusetts,

Connecticut, and Washington, D.C., and through referrals from participants themselves. This method of sampling, according to McCall and Simmons (1969), is referred to as the "snow ball method of sampling" when names are accumulated by word of mouth. Such rippling effects with numerous friends and colleagues generated 15 participants.

Interview Guide. Approaches to collecting qualitative data through interviews vary. The approach used for this study was the "general interview guide" approach as described by Patton (1980). This method of interviewing is similar to Merton, et al.'s (1956) "unstructured scheduled interview," whereby the investigator has a list of topics to be covered, yet the style of conversation is non-directive, allowing for conversational flow.

This approach to interviewing was selected for several reasons. First, it ensures that basically the same information will be obtained from participants. Second, it helps make the interviews more systematic and comprehensive because the issues to be discussed in the interview have been delimited. Third, it allows for further exploration and probing on the part of the interviewer (Patton, 1980).

Organizing the Data

Data must be organized both materially and conceptually. The materials issues involve how the data will be physically collected and maintained. The following procedure was used for this study: the taped interviews were transcribed in full and four copies were made. One copy was kept as a reference, one copy was used by each of the two independent coders, and one copy was cut into parts and sorted into

categories.

The conceptual issues involve the initial organization of data. This, according to Patton, may be derived from two sources: (1) the questions generated during the conceptual phase of the study, and

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

Analysis of data in qualitative research requires the identification and examination of patterns which emerge from the data sources. In this case, the data sources were the literature and the subject interviews (Denzin, 1970). According to Patton (1980),

Analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units. Interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions (p. 268).

Miles and Huberman (1985) suggest a sequence of steps which were followed in this data analysis process. These steps are: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing, and verification. Data reduction "refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming of raw data" (p. 23).

Data display involves organizing the data to allow conclusion drawing and action taking. During conclusion drawing and verification, meaning will be drawn from the reduced displayed data and patterns, and possible configurations, explanations and regularities are noted. These conclusions are also verified. These three flows of activity are interwoven before, during and after collection. Miles and Huberman explain,

In this view, the three types of analysis activity and the activity of data collection form an interactive, cyclical process. The researcher steadily moves among these four "nodes" during data collection, then shuttles among reduction, display, and conclusion-drawing/verification for the remainder of the study (p. 24).

Patton (1981) suggests that one way of representing the patterns that emerge from the analysis of data is to construct categories or typologies to organize presentation of particular themes.

Coding the Data

The initial coding system derived from a sample analysis of five of the 15 transcribed interviews. The researcher first searched for themes and issues which the participants raised without being directly questioned. For example, one question asked was about Black women's major hurdles in the workplace. References to major hurdles were counted and coded only when a subject raised it outside of the question which addressed it. In this way, the researcher was able to discern which issues seemed salient to the participants apart from those the researcher addressed in the interview.

Seventeen themes/issues were identified. These were as follows: (1) Black women/African descent, (2) sense of self, (3) exclusionary behavior/not fitting the norm, (4) competitive environment/organizational culture, (5) rite of passage/team player, (6) position of containment/career mobility, (7) confrontation/reactions, (8) reactions as an alternative to hurdles, (9) networking/access to channels, (10) lack of recognition and respect, (11) lack of utilization of resources, (12) disconnection/leaving the organization, (13) lack of

support/access to career opportunities, (14) performance appraisal/promotability, (15) racial discrimination/unequal representation, (16) withholding/manipulation of information, and (17) career options/career opportunities. The initial themes/issues were individually filed and new categories were added as data were collected and new possibilities presented themselves.

Developing Typologies

It became clear after the sample coding that ten of the 17 themes/issues appeared with disproportionately greater frequency than the others. Specifically, these were: (1) rites of passage, (2) competition, (3) lacking access to informal networks, (4) solo vs. token, (5) organization contributions/lack of support, (6) reactions to the workplace, (7) performance appraisal, (8) issues of containment, (9) withholding/manipulation of information, and (10) sense of self.

Patton describes typologies generally as "classification systems made up of categories divide some aspect of the world into parts" (1980, p. 306). The world, "in this case, is the problem which the study is addressing." Additionally,

The primary purpose of typologies is to describe. These typologies can later be used to make interpretations about the nature of the problem, but the first purpose is descriptions based on the analysis of the patterns that appear in the data (Patton, 1980, p. 311).

For example, one analyst-constructed typology indicative of patterns in the data was ultimately determined to be In Group/Out Group. Data were believed to "fit" this typology when it could be found across

situations. The process used to arrive at this typology follows.

As described by Guba (1978), the analyst of qualitative data must deal with two problems: "congruence," figuring out which things fit together so as to classify the data, and "divergence," figuring out how to "flesh out" the categories. The analyst can approach the problem of convergence by judging one's categories using two criteria: "internal homogeneity," meaning the extent to which the data in a certain category hold together, and "external heterogeneity," or the extent to which differences among categories are bold and clear (Patton, 1980). According to Patton, the task of the researcher is to then move back and forth between the data and the classification systems in order to verify the meaningfulness and accuracy of the categories and the data placement within them.

Guba and Patton's criteria thus became a starting point for reexamining the remaining seven themes/issues within the context of the two most salient ones. The fleshing out process, suggests Guba (1978), can best be done by building on previously known items of information, building or making connections among items, and proposing new information. For example, knowing that the theme/issue "rite of passage" is closely related to team player and lack of recognition and support, the connection was made between these three items of information to form an exclusionary category which could be described as In Group/Out Group.

Finally, the process of convergence and divergence is complete when information sources have been exhausted, sets of categories are saturated such that new sources become redundant, when there are clear

regularities, and when analysis begins to surpass the parameters of the issues and concerns guiding the analysis (Patton, 1980).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents and describes the data from 15 participants interviewed. Responses to each of the 17 interview questions are described in narrative form so as to capture both the specifics and richness of the data. The two and sometimes three most frequently cited responses to each question can be found summarized in table form in Chapter V where they are grouped by category and frequency of response.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section A focuses on the participants' professional background and self-identified characteristics. Section B focuses on the work environment of the organization while Section C offers suggestions as a prescription for other Black women. Finally, Section D groups the responses of the participants according to their work categories. An in-depth analysis of the raw data is presented in Chapter V.

The data will be presented as direct quotes, but without attribution to specific participants by name. The administrative level of the participant is noted when that information is relevant to the comment. In most cases, quotes are given verbatim, and statements made with particular emphasis are italicized. Grammar has been altered as necessary for understanding, but every effort is made to stay as close to the original statement as possible. Items coded under "miscellaneous" represent single responses of the participant which did not easily fit the other categories.

Lastly, the responses to the questions in Section C regarding recommendations are grouped and reported together in order to achieve a more holistic view.

Section A: Professional Background

Question 1

What is the nature of your job? (What do you do?)

The response to this question is divided into the following five major work categories: health care, education, media/TV, private, and public organizations, in order to reflect the nature of the participant's job and how she chose to describe her role. Prior to each of their statements, I have used the participant's title in place of acronyms.

Health Care

Director of Continuing Care. "I am a Director of Continuing Care at a major hospital in Boston. My work primarily involves discharge planning. I supervise eight RNs to ensure that they discharge patients from the hospital in a timely, safe, and appropriate manner."

Nursing Instructor. "I teach nursing at a state college, a public institution, and I teach at the senior level, so my experience is pretty much working with students and the community. I also teach nursing research and coordinate the classroom and teaching activities."

Discharge Planner. "I do discharge planning for inpatient and outpatient populations for a large comprehensive cancer center."

Private Organization

Engineer. "I do research into languages, high level languages that talk to computers in the area of building large systems. I also teach."

Customer Representative. "I am a customer representative for an insurance company and my job is to set up accounts for terminated employees of existing organizations. We bill these people on a monthly basis. This job involves four entities: the organization, the group, the claims offices, and group representatives."

Director of Human Resources. "I am the Director of Human Resources in the pension area for a large financial institution. This is the parent company so the job has a lot of traveling involved. We employ approximately 60,000 people nationwide but the area I am responsible for consists of 1,200 people with 33 field offices. I conduct management training and development in the area of legitimacy of hiring and retaining employees."

Public Organization (Federal Government)

Minority Business Enterprise Program Coordinator. "I am a minority business enterprise program coordinator for community planning and development. I manage and develop programs to aid minority business in receiving government contracts across the nation."

Senior Panelist. "I am a senior panelist whose responsibility is to oversee the implementation of certain federal programs at the local

level. In addition, I make sure that the funds are available at the local level to ensure such implementation."

Senior Panelist. "I am a senior panelist working ten years with the federal government. I ensure that certain civil right objectives are met in the hand books or procedures for other agencies to follow. I work with a staff of about 17 professionals and two secretaries."

Media

Associate Producer. "I am associate producer for _____. There is an assistant producer and a full producer and basically an associate producer does essentially the same thing a full producer does but the title determines the salary. I am a tape producer. I do tape pieces. I decide on a topic and do all the segments that are feature news on ***. If a segment of the news is designer fashion I will do all of the segments for fashion, then I move into the music segment to blend with the fashion segment."

Journalist. "I write a column twice a week for the _____. I write about local, national and international politics. I write about women's issues, race and sometimes personal issues."

Talk Show Host. "I am both a producer and host of a half hour magazine program. It is my responsibility to put together the ideas for the program, what is going to be covered, who we are going to select to talk about these various topics, making sure that the camera man shoots the right visuals, coming back to the station and looking at the tapes and writing a script that will go with the interview."

Education

Student Organization Advisor. "I work as an advisor to roughly 250 undergraduate registered student organizations. This process involves working with various organizations that are made up of representatives of our campus population with different backgrounds, different cultures and different needs."

Director of a Minority Program. "I am a program developer that literally builds and constructs a program for the _____ in the area of students of color. I am a counselor, administrator, an architect, contractor, interior design landscaper and real estate agent and the description in all of that is that's what's happening. What's been difficult is that when they ask me to be the electrician or the plumber. There are some limits on what I can do. I'm building a program. Not running it. I am building a program that was not pre-established."

Educational Administrator and Vice Chancellor. "I am an educational administrator and vice chancellor of student affairs. I write policies in the area of student affairs for the system of public higher education."

Section B: Organizational Environment

Question 1

How would you describe your experience working for this organization?

The most frequently cited (eight times) were issues relating to an exclusionary experience in terms of not fitting the norm or criteria for

acceptance into the "good old boys' network." According to the engineer, "there is a hierarchical structure that leans heavily toward being paternalistic, and in turn creates an environment of female dependency."

A TV host explains, "Eighty to 90 percent of the department heads are White males. These men make all the decisions and develop all the policies in the organization.

They make the determinations, set the pace and the woman carries out the directives."

Fitting into the "good old boy network" automatically assumes that you are a team player. According to a senior federal analyst,

Being a team player takes on different characteristics depending on the players and the situation. Sometimes to be a team player, you have to forego certain ethical and moral decisions in order to participate in graft and corruption or it could take the form of turning your attention away from a co-worker who comes to work at 10:30 AM goes to lunch at 12PM, returns "slushed" at 2 PM and goes home at 4:30 p.m.

Other exclusionary characteristics mentioned were not being invited to lunch, not letting participants know the "inside scoop" on how the organization really works, failure to pass along information, not dropping by to visit and not getting to know people of color.

Finally, being part of the "good old boy network" meant having the right credentials in terms of attending the same Ivy League schools, i.e., Harvard, Yale, Cornell; belonging to the same clubs, living in the same neighborhoods, or even living in the same geographical area, i.e., Boston, Cambridge, or Connecticut. One participant reported, "If I had two Ph.D.s it wouldn't matter, I would not be included" (this

participant had a Ph.D. in nursing), while another program director from the federal government felt that 'Black schools' do not have the same respect and recognition as White schools."

Issues relating to a competitive environment were the second most often cited group of responses. Six participants spoke to certain forms of competition as it related to the nature of their positions. These participants saw competition from an individual standpoint. As one journalist explains

There is creative competition that exists in the workplace which makes for a very tense situation. The metropolitan paper is a very tough market. So its not simply like writing a news story. I am paid to have an opinion, so that's what gives it it's 'creative competition' and makes it challenging at the same time.

On the other hand, a television producer describes the environment as "back stabbing". "Things happen quickly in the newsroom and you have to respond quickly, so you learn to step over the dead bodies, especially those people who try to get in your way."

Participants representing the federal government look at the competition that results from the need to implement action. As one program director explains, "We have a lot of state funds, and we have to make sure the mayors are using that money based upon the congressional actions and that it does not go to the wealthy." One senior analyst states that "sometimes it's a fairly uncomfortable position to be in because someone is always wanting to compete with the ways you are handling your job."

Finally, these three items are coded under miscellaneous, since they were identified by a single subject and did not fit any of the response

groups mentioned above: (1) state of flux due to the reorganization of the department, (2) political environment due to the physical division of the organization and the nature of their divisions, and (3) very confusing to work in at this time, because the communication system is inadequate for the size of the organization.

Question 2

If you were to describe yourself, what would be important for people to know about you?

The category cited most frequently by participants was being a Black women of African-American descent. Eleven women out of the 15 chose to describe themselves as a Black woman in the first sentence of their response. The rest of the participants tended to weave their identities throughout their responses.

The director of a minority program at a prestigious university states,

I describe myself as being an African-American woman because I think that is something I'm not willing to change or exchange or to give up in any way, or fashion, and it seems like the older I get the more balanced I become in understanding the history of all those years that Black women were left alone to serve in nontraditional roles. Where all that fits for me is that I get to borrow all of it. I get the best of all that. I just see that I've never wished to be anybody else. I find a sense of gratification in claiming that, and its free claiming.

Other responses include statements such as: "Being a Black woman I would have to say," or "First and foremost I would let some people know I am a Black woman," or "Let me begin by stating that I am a Black woman

and very proud to say so," or "Let me begin by stating that being a Black woman has helped me."

Another participant, representing a large metropolitan newspaper, said, "I am connected to an historical field, or should I say, I feel very much a part of my historical field, very much a part of the forces that shaped me." Other descriptive references related to work performances such as ability or intelligence, but were always attached to being a Black woman. As one health care participant stated, "As a Black woman I know my ability, and intellectually I can grasp things very easily." Others reference referred to their interpersonal skills. According to another health care participant, "I am a very sensitive person, a very compassionate person and one who values the opinions of others and who listens to what they have to say." Finally, the assistant vice chancellor for student affairs comments "I would like to think of myself as the kind of interacting, stable, wise and well-healed Black woman."

Frequently cited group of responses related to a sense of self, in terms of having a sense of pride or feeling proud of achievements and accomplishments. Seven participants gave themselves value and recognition for their successes and achievements. For example, one participant working for a major television network stated, "I always believed in myself. I always felt good about myself. I never believed anything from anybody else that might diminish how I felt about myself." Another participant felt that "our empowerment comes out of our proudness and if we don't have the pride, then we can't access our empowerment."

The last major category cited was being religiously oriented or spiritually connected to themselves and others. All the participants referred to religion in one form or another throughout the interview. Concrete examples of this category are provided in the Recommendations section of this study.

Miscellaneous items included being family and community oriented and having a sense of pride in or caring for other Black women.

Question 2B

If you wanted to advance your career in this organization, are there major hurdles that may limit you gaining access to these advanced positions? If so, what are they?

The responses of nine participants reflected the issue of "rite of passage," in terms of becoming a team player. The definition of a team player took on different forms depending on the organization, but overall the participants felt that in order to be a team player, you have to be blessed and ordained by members or a member of the group (the group always consisting of White males). Membership in the group determines one's place in the organization. This process provided legitimacy for their being. According to one insurance representative, "In addition to being blessed and ordained, your credentials and background have to fit into the higher echelon, such as attending the same schools, living in the same community and attending and belonging to the same social functions."

Another form of being a team player meant giving up some parts of your identity. For example, the journalist commented that "those who

move up the ladder fastest are people whose ideas are appreciated, acceptable and are closest to the perceptions and views of the higher echelon."

Being a team player entitles one to certain benefits and privileges. According to the inservice program trainer, a team player is entitled to all the real benefits of the company like stock options and bonuses. Receptive to these benefits is an indication that one has become a team player.

They don't seem to be threatened by Black female clerks, secretaries or policy specialists, but when you start getting into the area (I believe of managing the functions and operations of the company) a flag goes up and what is usually said, okay she's trying to come to the top.

Six participants answering this question referred to the issue of containment. By this they meant a limit or range of free movement available to Black women in terms of career mobility. As one participant put it, "The hurdle that I face is getting out of the job in which I am presently in. There are certain things within the structure of the company that will not allow you to advance." Two participants felt that their supervisor pre-selected or slated certain positions for Black women. One participant felt, "I was hired to do a specific thing and only that specific thing. I think they see Black folks in a way that we don't have any other interest outside of our chosen interest." One participant spoke of her boss coming to her office and jokingly reminding her of a position that was open, but said that if she inquired about the position he would break her leg!

Two of the participants who represented the media felt that there were stereotypical images that contributed to their containment. Both participants had assignments that dealt with human stories revolving around Black issues. The term used was soft news and one participant stated, "It is an assumption that only Blacks can talk about Black issues or that that is where they are best suited. The consequences of this situation can easily 'typecast' your position so that you are not recognized to do anything else."

Three participants felt strongly that there were negative consequences in becoming a team player, because, for them, to become a team player meant an absence of social conscience. Similarly, two participants from the federal government stated that they did not want to advance their careers because "it meant giving up a part of your soul." Yet another participant felt that "she didn't want to advance her career if it meant kissing boots, sacrificing her integrity both body and soul to advance your career."

Two items fall under the miscellaneous category. These related to switching career tracks in order to advance if all other positions were blocked, and the potential for political bias on the part of the decision-maker.

Question 3

What would be some of the way you would address these hurdles?

At first the responses to this question were broad and varied; they did not appear to concentrate in any category or grouping. Upon closer observation, however, the majority of the responses reflected an

assertive and individualistic approach to the situation (doing it on their own). Statements such as, "I would go directly to the individual who has the power and authority to make changes," or, "I would sit down in conference one-on-one," and finally, "I would seek out someone who had more humanistic qualities because some people in the organization really don't care where you fit," were quite typical responses to this question.

Other participants chose to disconnect themselves from the organization and select other alternatives to grow and develop in their careers. Some made decisions to go back to school, while others chose to involve themselves in other aspects of their work, such as writing. One participant wrote and published a manual that is currently being used in all the field offices across the country. She stated, "I don't look at rejection as a negative thing. . . . For me it's a challenge to turn it into something positive. I also feel that you can create your dreams and opportunities outside the organization. If necessary, move on."

One participant stated that hurdles are not intentional, but are often based on the individual's poor preparation. The director of an insurance program defines her reality through her union with God: "If that job was not for me to have I know God has something better in store for me." Another saw it as an opportunity to market herself within the organization. In doing so, she strove for winning awards and public recognition, thereby making her presence an asset to the organization. One participant succinctly remarked, "I don't depend on the organization

to fulfill my career needs and perks. I get them from outside the organization or public."

Finally, one participant had resigned herself to the fact that it may not be possible to overcome the hurdle. She states, "I guess there is a part of me that really believes that it would never happen, (that it's not do-able) because it appears there is an incompatibility of Black women's perceptions of themselves and the realities of the workplace!"

Question 4

In terms of recruitment, selection and promotion describe the process that got you to your present position.

With the exception of three participants, the response cited most frequently was networking. In terms of recruitment, only three participants followed the traditional track of gaining entrance into the organization; i.e., looking for a job in the classified ads. The rest of the participants were aware of the positions prior to filling out an application. Six of the 11 participants knew someone already in the organization, and the other five participants knew of a friend that could contact someone within the facility. There was only one candidate who conducted her own national search for a job. Sometimes the experiences were uneventful and sometimes they were not. According to the engineer, "Well, the way I was recruited was through a friend of mine who operated a head-hunter shop, while another participant stated, "I was asked by one of the assistant directors of nursing who was on staff to come and work on the staff."

One TV spokesperson started out as a newswriter, as she recalls:

I flunked the writing test. I was just out of school, I was nervous. I did not know what I was doing. I came back and I took the test twice and I got the job. It was an awful job, paying just the minimum wage. I was working midnight till four in the morning. It's always that first shit job you have to take.

Networking was also largely responsible for participants receiving promotions. Nine of the participants felt that it was absolutely impossible to get to a certain level without someone advocating for or promoting you. "It's networking that got me where I am," recalls one participant. "You just have to have one."

Recognizing the reality of how the organization functions, one participant made use of all her options. "You have to have a network of people all over the organization; i.e., secretaries who type up the positions and send it to personnel, even the janitor who overhears conversations while waxing the floor."

There was one participant who understood the limitations and reality of the process. As she recalls, "there was a person who got me in, but the person who's keeping me there is myself. Myself and my abilities to do the job that have been put before me." Finally, one participant felt that the way to advance was to know people in powerful positions. She states, "There was a person who was instrumental in going to the governor and requesting that the replacement of his position [he was resigning] should be another Black person. That person was me."

Question 5

Does your current position match your qualifications (in terms of your education and experience)?

In responding to this question, most of the participants spoke about issues relating to the underutilization and misuse of human resources.

All of the women but one were qualified for their current position both in terms of education and experience. The one exception was a TV participant whose previous experience did not match her current position: "I came from a television station of soft news to a station of hard news. This created a whole different approach to the job. It was something I had to learn."

Many of the jobs leaned more toward experience than formal schooling. Participants illustrated this point in phrases such as, "I am so qualified that I train all the newcomers and watch them get promoted; I am more qualified than most people who have a higher position than myself." "I have a master's degree and they have none." "I am more qualified for the position but that doesn't guarantee me respect and recognition." "Even though I went to Stamford," remarked one participant,

I am a Black female. You can be Black and go to the best schools in the country in this crowd and you still ain't got it. You're still no good. We have Black women with a Ph.D. around here that are not spoken to for days and weeks.

According to one participant, "It's not difficult to understand how your feelings of self esteem can get violated in this type of environment."

Continuing with the same thought, one health care worker explained:

When I first entered the department, the rule was that in order to qualify for an associate professor position you had to have a doctorate. So, I got one. Now that I have the position, people who don't have a doctorate degree are getting positions of associate professors. These are little subtleties that let you know that you don't rate very high. Like the old saying goes, 'once Blacks get into the system the rules change.'

Another participant stated:

I could be doing more than I'm doing now. I could be more creative and innovative looking at curriculum kinds of issues but I don't have the opportunity to do so. My doctorate has prepared me to work in this capacity but the system is designed to keep me from performing in this area.

Question 5B

What additional aspirations do you have for your career in this organization?

This question drew three different types of responses: those that chose to stay but had no aspirations, those that chose to stay with aspirations and those that chose to leave the organization.

For those who chose to stay with the organization but had no aspirations, age, salary and length of time with the organization were determining factors for their decision. As one participant explains, "I am 55 years old, I am making \$65,000 now; it is inconceivable for me to start at the bottom again."

Others chose to stay because ideologically they felt that the environment of the workplace would not change significantly from one organization to another in terms of the way Black women are treated. "I speak with Black women from other organizations and our stories are the same," comments one participant. One of the participants did not have

the required masters degree to qualify for upward mobility but maintained a unique position in the company because of being highly specialized and trained in a certain area. This feeling of being valued compensated for other aspirations.

Other participants aspired to carve out different rules for themselves in the organization, thereby creating a new position for themselves and complementing the organization at the same time.

For one participant, aspirations were not defined in terms of a position. "I don't want the position of a chairperson; I am happy being a level coordinator, but I need to do something that gives me a sense of growth and creativity." For the TV host, aspiration was to be seen as other than the Black host of this television series: "It's so easy to be typecast in television, and being Black makes the situation worse."

Finally five of the 15 participants chose to persevere their aspirations outside of the organization. As one states, "The feeling of constantly being under seige and having to define yourself every other day does not make for a happy working situation." Another participant remarked, "Sometimes when I wake up in the morning, watching soap operas all day feels better to me than going to work because at least the TV does not judge me."

Miscellaneous responses included participants who wanted their position in the organizational structure changed so that they could report to a person with power

Question 6

What contributions has the organization made toward your advancement?

In answering this question, participants most frequently referred to the lack of support on the part of the organization for the participant's advancement. The responses varied regarding the participant's perception of what role the organization actually played in their level of advancement. One participant compared professional support to that given to entry-level positions, "essentially opening the door but that's where it begins and ends. Organizations do not make commitments to individuals." While two other participants felt that the organization had not done anything for their advancement, one nursing coordinator states, "Anything I have acquired here or accomplished I have done in spite of, rather than because of, support from the system."

The insurance representative stated, "They have not done anything for my advancement, but I do not depend on the organization to do it for me. I do it myself. I don't depend on other people to give me the answers."

On a different note, one participant looked at advancement as a matter of the organization providing the finances and time to travel. As she explains,

There is some real resentment of what I thought was a contribution. I think there should be much more in relationship to my travel and that will be a major negotiation piece next year when I go in for my APR and the renewal of my contract. I need for the organization to understand that it's essential for me to get out of here, and the professional development piece for me is being able to go when I say I need to go.

The participant from the federal government viewed the organization's attempt at support as actually interfering with the process:

Quite frankly, they tried to stop my advancement. For instance, the lifeblood of government work is paper and policies and when new ones come out, I don't get them from the director. He will not give them to me. If I have to go into a meeting and represent this office, I will fall on my face because I don't know the latest policy. Millions of dollars could go down the tube because I don't know the policy, then one day somebody is going to look at me and say she is not keeping up.

Finally, one participant felt that her lack of advancement came from preconceived notions that White males have about the needs of Blacks. She felt that these notions stem from their limited exposure and the way they have been socialized to relate to Blacks. As she explains,

White males who don't have Black suburban neighbors don't have the opportunity to see Blacks in these kinds of roles. They are only exposed to us through work. Other contacts tend to come in limited ways. One colleague said to me one day that he has an Aunt Clara that he loves, etc., etc. His Aunt Clara was his nanny and to him this was Black people.

The second most frequent category of responses related to the nature of organizational support in terms of promotions and of the space to approach the job creatively. One participant states, "Well, first of all the promotion was a help. It made me want to work and accept new challenges and what have you. I've gotten recognition in the form of cash awards for my performances. I did a management study that was used to train others across the nation and it was really good for my division. I received a written commendation."

Another participant states, "They leave me alone now that they know I'm a self starter. I say to them I'm going to restructure the Golden

Gate Bridge and they all say, 'Ya go ahead.' They don't care what I do. So in other words it's freedom."

Miscellaneous responses included one participant who was not ready to challenge the organization until she completed her masters degree, and another participant who felt that her advancement was dependent on being in the right place at the right time.

Question 7

When promotions become available in the organization, how is their availability communicated?

Most participants stated quite clearly that access to resources was denied by the withholding of information. Fourteen of the participants stated that promotions were posted when they became available, but nine of the 14 participants stated that the organizations were only going through the motions because the positions were really earmarked for someone else.

Having this information at hand, one participant remarked, "Why bother to apply?" "Most of the time, these jobs have been circulating before posting, so that certain individuals can get a head start," commented an associate TV producer. The director for a minority program stated, "The boys first communicate between themselves before anyone else hears about it; it is a form of pre-selection. I read about an opportunity for promotion in the Chronicle for Higher Education, before the information appeared on the Department Bulletin Board." One participant states that, "The level to which a job originates determines how far down the ladder it has to travel. If a position gets stopped at

a higher level (upper management), it will not get down to the lower level (middle management and below)." "Predictable jobs for predictable people," was the comment of the insurance company participant.

Finally, a senior analyst from the federal government commented, "In almost every case, people know whether the positions are legitimate, meaning that a person sitting right in the office is going to get the job."

Miscellaneous responses included that of one participant who stated that for the newspaper industry, "Jobs are not posted. "Depending on the nature of the organization, each division has certain standards regarding the rewarding of individuals for outstanding performance. Sometimes this comes in the form of promotion."

Finally, one participant of a TV talk show stated that, "Positions are not posted and because of that, you always have to be lobbying for yourself, or holding your ear to the wall as an indirect house pipeline."

Question 8

What opportunities for advancement does your present position provide?

All of the Black women felt that their present positions contained opportunities for advancement, but because of responses stated below, some of the participants chose not to seek out those opportunities in the organization.

Most participants discussed promotions in terms of switching career tracks. The participants defined this term as physically relocating

within the organizational structure and performing a different function. A discharge planner for a large metropolitan hospital provided a good illustration of how this process works: "In the health care industry, specifically nursing, there is one director of nursing per division. Rather than wait indefinitely for the position to become vacant, I may choose to look at other career tracks in the field of nursing such as research, clinical care, or education/teaching." This process also held true for the participant who worked for a large metropolitan newspaper. She notes that, "In the newspaper division there were many tracks because the organization was physically divided into two sections, the business side and the operations side.

The second most cited group of responses included those which dealt with leaving the organization because of issues around race, gender, and class. For instance, one engineer for a large manufacturing plant said, "Upward mobility favors the White male, because when you look at the top of the organizational ladder and all you see are White males, it tends to put a damper in your thinking for opportunities."

Another participant felt that because she was a known entity (liberal, feminist and Black), "There are a lot of opportunities that are aborted because I don't fit the norm." In a similar vain, one commented that, "I am a good show case but for nothing else, so I am looking outside the organization."

One participant felt that, "The men at the top haven't moved in the last twenty years and when they do, someone in their family, friends or community is awarded the position." Along the same lines, a participant representing education felt that, "There are no paths, because your

status in the department largely determines your opportunities for advancement. The ranking order is faculty, administration and administrative staff. I am considered administrative staff, so my only chance for new opportunities is to jump over to faculty. The consequences of the different levels lie in the following: "I could not go to Tennessee, but a faculty person could go to Australia."

On the other hand, two of the participants who worked for the federal government chose not to switch career tracks because of the political nature of the positions. One commented, "If the president in the White House is Republican, then to qualify for the position you have to become a Republican, and likewise for being a Democrat."

Finally there were five participants who chose not to advance their career in the organization. They were able to separate their sense of self worth for their side in the organization. As one participant so eloquently stated,

I'm at a point in my life where opportunities in the workplace are not a driving force for me in terms of where I want to be now. I'm at the point where I'm looking at other challenges that I might take in education. When I first started out in education my goal was to be a Black president in a Black college; that's what I wanted to be. That's the last thing I want now. Part of it is where I am in my own tradition and in my own space in life. I've moved now to another space where what I value is not the money or the title but what it is I can do to make a difference and once that happens, I have everything.

On the other hand, another participant felt that while there were no opportunities in the context of the organization, her present position did provide opportunities for a kind of outside expansion. She notes, "I could write a book based on my column, make speeches, and possibly become nationally syndicated."

Question 9

What is the racial composition of the workplace?

The findings for this question are divided into the participants' five major work categories. All the participants were the only Black women in their designated position for their particular division.

In the division of health care, one discharge planner reported that, "I am the only Black nurse in the hospital of 1,500 employees." She reported no other people of color. This was the same facility with a staff composed of 98 percent Irish Catholics. Another health care worker states there are three Blacks to approximately 45 Whites, with no other people of color. Finally, the health care educator was the only Black person out of a faculty of forty.

The category of education revealed one Black woman out of roughly 30 people. Another participant said, "There are ten Blacks to seventy Whites," and one participant stated she was the only Black woman administrator in a department of sixty-seven. Other ethnic groups included two junior faculty who are Black women, one Latino, and one South African male.

Participants representing the media reported four Black associate producers, one Black male associate producer, one Black researcher, and three Black news clerks out of one hundred White co-workers. A TV spokeswoman reported 150 White co-workers and for every 5 Whites there is only one Black. While the Black columnist reported there were seven to eight Whites for every Black out of 225 White co-workers.

In the private sector, the figures varied. The engineer stated, "I am the only Black woman in my division of 600 engineers." The

participants from the insurance division numbered four to five Blacks to every 20 Whites out of 360 in their division. There were no other ethnic groups represented.

Finally those representing the public sector identified one Black woman and nine Whites in their immediate work groups.

Question 9B

How does this composition make you feel?

The responses to this question reflected the amount of time the Black women devoted to the process of accommodating themselves to a life-style devoid of positive feelings about their work environment. Terms such as indifferent, frustrated, uncomfortable, defensive, angry, ambivalent were expressions commonly used by the participants to describe their feelings.

Two participants understood why other Blacks have come and gone. "You always find yourself on guard, being very defensive in certain interactions (because you are always in a position of defending yourself)." Another participant explains, "I become very angry because I know Blacks are qualified to do the job."

One participant expressed her feelings thusly, "Sometimes you are so used to being out there you become immune or indifferent to being alone." "It takes this type of interview to really begin to stimulate my thinking. It's scary when you actually take the time and say to yourself or question the deprivation of your happiness and development by the absence of individuals mirroring your own reflections. It can sometimes lead to being nonproductive."

A statement about ambivalence demonstrated sensitivity to the interactions between participants and other members of the workplace. "It always puts you in a position of wondering how they really feel about you." One participant understood the culture of the workplace but became frustrated when new people came into the department:

It becomes my responsibility to indoctrinate White people all over again to the fact that I am not a token Black or part of an affirmative action program. You almost get the feeling from the White people that, 'I am all right to talk to, I am not dumb and I am not stupid.' I really get tired of it.

One participant stated, "I feel guilt toward other Black women who are not at my level. It feels like I should be doing something for them." Finally, referring to being the only Black woman in the workplace, one participant said, "It does not make you feel good (a very long pause). It really doesn't."

One miscellaneous response was that of the participant who "did not feel uncomfortable" being the only Black woman in the organization.

Question 10

What role do performance appraisals play in becoming eligible for promotion?

The majority of the women (ten participants) stated that performance appraisals were important in terms of promotion, job security, and personal and professional growth. But these same participants became confused when asked to assess the actual value of these performance appraisals.

According to a television associate producer, "Performance appraisals were not taken seriously prior to the hiring of a new personnel director. Promotions were based on a head count and today the department heads still have not embraced the concept of performance appraisals. They do not use them as a tool like they should. It's just something they have to do."

Another participant from the media (newspaper) spoke to the issue of uniformity within the same organization, "Performance appraisals are not given regularly and you don't know when to expect them. I get one every year but I don't know what role it plays because I don't feel anything. I don't feel change."

The engineer stated, "I've never been able to figure this one out. They do it every year. We fill in what we want to do and most of the time it has no relevance to what we do. I was out sick this year and I got a raise anyway."

The second most cited category was issues relating to upward mobility and job security. As one participant stated,

In my organization, [performance appraisal] is the highest weight to determine whether or not you get a promotion. Even if you do not get a promotion, you are compensated with pay equal to the promotion. The value the performance appraisal plays is a means of protection and proof of competency. I think the reason that I get promoted is because I do very well and in this respect they can't deny me. I think if I didn't perform I'd be in trouble. I know other people with lesser skills and they get promoted. I've been programmed that you've got to be better than Whites.

Another stated, "I think performance appraisals are a real key. I make sure my part is detailed, noting everything I've done according to

a progressive time frame. I want to demonstrate that I don't need more work, what I need is a different kind of work."

There were two participants who reported that performance appraisal did not play a role in the promotion of individuals. Explains one participant, "performance appraisals have nothing to do with promotions. They either like you or they don't. Even if you are competent and they don't like you, you will have a difficult time crossing careers."

Miscellaneous responses referred to students who played a significant role in the participant's performance appraisal, and the rallying of community support as a means of job security in the absence of performance appraisals.

Question 11

Do you feel that discrimination plays a role in the organization?
If so, how?

Although the participants raised issues in answering this question, two that appeared central to their discussion, hiring practices and treatment. Participants did not discuss the hiring process per se, but rather the actual numbers as viewed by themselves. In one way or another all the participants spoke to the unequal representation of Whites compared to Blacks. "Being naive or passive regarding the complexion of the organizational make up is occupational suicide," stated one participant. "Numbers tell you a lot because it is the first visible indication that discrimination may play a role in the organization."

One participant spoke to being the only Black nurse among 98 percent Irish Catholics. As she recalls, "You don't realize it at first when you are introduced into the facility. But midway through you have to say, 'Wait a minute, something is wrong with this picture.' It becomes especially noticeable when you begin to interact with them, because they are all you see."

A health care participant felt that it is significant when you look around and see no other Black people. Another participant explained, "It's not difficult to understand the complexity of the organization when you are confronted with it on a daily basis."

One federal participant explains it this way: "Most of the days are filled with meetings, and when you walk into a business meeting and there are ten people and nine of them are White males, or you go to another meeting in the afternoon and there are 20 in the room and 19 are White, then that begins to say something. It really says a lot."

One participant from education points out that, "Discrimination plays a role in the hiring practices because the complexion of the faculty has not changed. This also accounts for admissions into the different programs. For example, the MBA program is all White, and masters program in accounting is all White. You look at the various key roles in the department and they're primarily White. I think by virtue of the establishment . . . indicates that discrimination is present."

According to the associate television producer,

Black women are burdened by such things as limited access to certain resources in the form of opportunities. There are no Black women producers on the show. There is one Black male associate producer, one Black researcher, two Black news clerks out of eight. The numbers are just so small and the positions are just so relegated that it screams racism to me right there,

because you can't tell me that there are not qualified Black people out there that could be doing the same jobs.

One participant remarked:

When I attend decision-making conferences and meetings and I am continually confronted with an all White audience except for me and when there may be two or three White women or no White women, that is sending a message, and it is not one of not being able to find someone to do the job. It says to me that this organization is primarily centered around, directed toward and promotes White males. They generate toward their own kind.

Finally, those women who had a strong sense of their identity found it uncomfortable to work in these settings where the numbers are greater than themselves. Two participants felt it difficult to interact with Whites: "There is a particular hesitancy on my part because it's difficult to sense their sincerity. You see, they don't need to know who I am when there are so many of them to relate to each other."

The second category that emerged from this question was treatment in the form of exclusionary behavior on the part of the organization. Most of the issues commented on were those that related to being excluded on a personal and professional basis.

Two participants felt that they were denied certain opportunities to travel and attend seminars in deference to White co-workers. According to the journalist, "When I requested to go to Africa to cover a certain event, my request was denied. I was told that two other journalists would be covering the story (these journalists were White, one male, one female). The denial of the request denied me the opportunity to bring a Black perspective to the event." Another participant claims, "I was passed over when I wanted to attend a management training seminar. Many

of my co-workers who attended did not have the same qualifications I have and were allowed to attend." Another participant explains, "There's a reluctance to push or support Black people as much as they support White people, support in the sense of sending them to such and such a conference, or seminar, or giving them an opportunity to produce a prime-time special."

Other participants were seeking support at a more fundamental level. "In my particular case," stated one participant, "I have to use the organizational pipeline to find out what new information or legislature policies have been passed in order to do my job. One of the ways I deal with this situation is to come in on weekends and read the files from one end to the other. I also network with some of the secretaries, who type information vital to my performance."

Another form of such behavior was being excluded from certain important activities. As one participant explained, "Not being invited to lunch is exclusionary because a lot of information gets passed over a mound of cottage cheese." Other such events included social activities such as playing golf, belonging to the same country club or being invited to the home for dinner.

Most of the participants agreed that discrimination did not play a one-note song, but moved continuously from one end of the scale to the other, leaning more toward the subtle end. For instance,

It's just in small ways that you know race is always a factor. There's a joke among us as Blacks because we tend to be very friendly toward each other. The joke is that we are never to be seen together, especially more than two at a time. If a third person appears, we have to decide which one of us has to leave.

To continue with the same thought, another participant commented that,

One day four of us were standing by the elevator and one of the TV correspondents walked by and said, 'Huh, nobody told me that somebody called an NAACP meeting here.'

Finally, three participants posit the existence of a preconceived notion of what the "correct" ways to act, look and talk: "When you come into the organization, and if you don't fit the stereotypical image of a Black woman, a whole range of reactions take place." For example, as one participant recalls, "A physician told me one day that I didn't sound Black and that my values appeared to be closer to those of White people." Another comment, offered by an insurance programmer, recalls a question being asked of her during her interview: "Where did you learn how to interview? You must have done it before." And finally, one of the federal participants was always reminded, "You always look so neat and clean coming to work."

Other examples of stereotyping may be found in the issue of qualifications for a job. This is especially true in cases where Black women are presumed to be affirmative action candidates, which in the minds of most White people translates into racist assumptions that the individual is less qualified. According to two participants, "Being qualified meant that you were a threat to your supervisor. They usually handled you in one of two ways, sit you off in a corner and ignore you, or attempt to exploit your intelligence by using your ideas as their own."

Section C: Recommendations

Recommendation #1

Looking back over the past five years, if you were to do it all over again, what suggestions would you give to other Black women?

There were numerous responses to this question. Responses fell roughly into five categories: (1) having a sense of self; (2) networking; (3) mentoring; (4) risk taking; and (5) preparation.

I will describe having a sense of self first. Sense of self for the participants was having a sense of pride in the legacy of Black history in terms of their own roots as a Black person. Terms such as know yourself, know who you are, strong sense of self, having a sense about yourself, and having a sense of your own identity, were used interchangeably among twelve of the participants.

For five of the participants, the concept of a sense of self was linked to an ethical and moral life style. One of the participants felt that sometimes, "The nature of the job has certain built-in mechanisms that will get you to play homage to the devil, so you need to have a strong character and strong morals and stick by these morals. Don't compromise."

Another participant explained, "Don't loose sight of yourself while attempting to achieve your goals. Sometimes you may need to let go of the goals rather than to lose your sense of self." Similarly, one participant stated, "If you don't have a sense about yourself, you will always be pleasing someone else instead of yourself, and that may not be too ethical" (no further explanation given). Still another commented, "Having a sense of self keeps you from getting contaminated by the

organization in getting you to do that which doesn't support what you want to be about, or how you may want to define yourself." Finally, one participant commented, "What I have learned, is to be able to stand in my own truth, thereby letting people know who I am and what I believe."

Finally:

From a very, very early age, I was always in a situation where I was the minority; elementary, junior high and high school. I went to camp where I was the only Black. It became a familiar environment but that's a double-edged sword. It can work in both ways without you becoming just like an amnesiac, a lost individual who has no cultural base, who has no cultural identity. What saved me from that was the grace of God and his divine plan. I got two back-to-back jobs working in two primarily Black organizations and that was cultural shock for me but that provided the balance that provided more cultural pride than I had had before and it helped tip the scale in a very healthy way.

Mentoring was the second category cited most frequently. Eight participants recognized the need to select a mentor with power and influence. The predominant responses were: You need someone who can measure your skills and talent, a person that has the influence to get behind closed doors that you cannot enter. Remember it doesn't happen because you are competent, it happens because people are there advocating and mentoring that person through. Knowing how to diagnose an organization takes time and experience, and a mentor becomes important in this role because they know what pieces fit and how it all comes together. It's the only way you can move forward, otherwise you become frustrated and drop out. As one participant recalls, "If I had a mentor, I wouldn't have felt like I was walking through a maze, occasionally catching my foot in snares along the way."

Networking was the third most frequently_cited category. It was extremely important to the majority of the Black women because the nature of the workplace dictated the necessities of a creative approach to this type of relationship. Seven of the participants valued networking as a means to maintain contact with people: "These people can give you support in terms of feedback regarding your performance. They can be critical and caring at the same time, without anticipating your demise."

Mindful of the obstacles embedded in the organization, one participant suggested, "Black women need to foster each other." For two participants this meant being an advocate for Black women, giving information and the location of resources necessary to excel in their role.

One participant felt that networking is a must, and gives the following reasons:

I have an incredible group of people who are invested in me and they love me, they cherish me. When I feel scared or in harm's way, they mobilize their energies to get me out of that, but always making sure I am directing and that it's my concert and my music.

Sometimes networking means reaching outside the organization or agency to individuals representing different forms of power. According to one participant, "When I was going to lose my position at work, I made appointments with the mayor, the city council and powerful organizations like the NAACP and the urban league. All were very helpful in taking the initiative to make certain phone calls and to give me certain information regarding individuals who could assist me."

Another participant described a different form of networking. "One rule of thumb to work by is to begin by knowing everyone in the organization, from the janitor to the secretaries. You never know who they are and how they are connected to the top."

Finally, participants did suggest that being oriented towards each other in the workplace can have some drawbacks. Words of caution were expressed by one participant in terms of trust. She exclaimed, "They may be of your color but not of your kind, or they may be of your kind but not your color."

The fourth item raised as suggestions to other Black women was risk-taking. Risk-taking raises two questions for Black women, according to a TV associate producer: "What are my strengths to be a risk-taker, and what are my vulnerabilities? Ultimately my vulnerabilities may determine my strength and the outcome of being a risk-taker." According to one participant, "Sometimes risk-taking means fear of failure for some Black women. These attitudes and beliefs become dysfunctional to the Black woman when it prevents her from seeking adjustments outside her present position."

All the participants were very clear in separating the fear of failure in terms of their own inadequacy and self esteem. As one participant explains, "The ease or difficulty it takes Black women to get to a certain position in a racist and sexist society determines the risk of getting out there and becoming vulnerable for rejection, but this process has nothing to do with the capabilities of the Black woman. The issues of inadequacy that operates in all of us is not linked to our capabilities or performance but to our race as to whether

we will be able to get another job just like the one we have," remarked another participant. According to the director of a minority program,

There are consequences and/or dangers to staying in a job and being treated a certain way. It empowers them more and empowers us less. I will vote for unemployment for you and send you money as opposed to seeing you live in fear and anger. When we lose our ability to risk or feelings of being worthy to move on (by the time it gets to that point), the damage has been done.

Risk-taking for the participants also spoke to behavior designed to defend oneself against (rather than ignore) challenges to one's presence, recognition and credibility. One participant advocated, "holding people accountable for their misdeeds," while another participant felt, "You need to be honest with them and be honest with yourself. Let them know you are not a wimp." Along the same lines, one participant felt stressed the need to be assertive and aggressive when appropriate. But according to two other participants, this type of behavior can become problematic for Black women who heretofore have been labeled as aggressive, thereby reinforcing the negative stereotype. Consequently, they concluded, the lack of being assertive may act as an internal barrier and prevent them from meeting their needs."

One participant spoke to the negative consequences of remaining in a position and being typecast for fear of losing what she already has. "Be careful of getting typecast," explains another participant, "because it may not make you marketable for other positions once you leave the organization." This is not unusual when one examines the difficulty involved in getting certain position. Explains one participant, "Don't get disappointed if you apply for a position and don't get it (especially if you know that you are capable of doing that job). Don't

let this experience depress you to the point where you stay in a job and you don't grow. Keep trying." Another participant commented, "You should enjoy the work that you do. If you don't like the work you do, move on, try something different, but don't let them push you out. You should leave on your own."

The fifth category was the urgency of Black women to be prepared to confront issues dealing with the workplace.

Some of the issues were adequate academic preparation, the need to push for excellence, and the advantages of having a diverse background. According to one participant, one has to understand the nature of the workplace and make the necessary adjustments academically in order to be marketable. "Knowing what I know today, I would definitely have completed my doctorate earlier with no hesitation. There were positions as associate VP or Vice President, or Dean, and I couldn't get picked up. Credentials clearly are still the ticket." Another participant commented along the same line: "I could have gone farther in the organization if I had completed my masters."

"In order to be part of the newspaper business you have to push for excellence," explains one participant. "You have to read four to five papers a day, because it gives you a sense of perspective to view the world by those who chose to write about it."

On another level, one participant explained, "Black women need to have experience in a variety of settings. Industry is changing rapidly and we have to keep pace. In addition, we have to have more experience, and I am saying this because I've seen White people in the same role with less experience and they still move ahead."

Aside from preparations in the work area, "Black women need to be psychologically prepared to be pushed around. Things are going to happen to you and you are going to have to have tough skin to deal with it. You can't cave in every time somebody says something to you or does something to you. You remember the saying, 'You are going to have to keep on stepping.'

Recommendation #2

What coping strategies have you developed as you have worked in this organization?

The response category cited most frequently was behaviors relating to religious or spiritual issues. The majority of the Black women (twelve) practiced certain rituals to maintain or restore order to their mental and spiritual balance that was being threatened in the workplace. Terms frequently used to express this behavior were: Getting back to meditation, reading the Bible, saying a daily prayer, prayer every morning. As one participant explained it, "I say a prayer every morning before I brush my teeth. I want to be in tune to whatever God wants me to be, and in time to receive what he has given me."

Remembering her childhood, one participant commented on how prayer was always a centerpiece of her family life. "My father used to read poetry also. Now I read the Bible and pray a lot. But you have to put on the whole armor of God and be prepared to do battle in a spiritual sense, so that you don't get bruised and you don't bruise them." Another participant stated with a convincing tone, "I believe that stuff really works" (referring to religion).

The second most frequently-cited category was the belief in and attitudes of belonging to a kinship or community. The roles that these relationships played varied, but were important in the meaning the participants derived from them.

Two participants credited their early days of nurturing by having parents and grandparents. Through love and support they were told they could do and be anything they wanted.

Other participants valued having people behind them that didn't accept failure. They also felt that family, husbands, children and friends played a significant role by being there and ready to listen. Explains one participant, "The greatest thing about being Black, you don't have to explain it to another Black person; they just know (thereby removing all feelings of not being understood)."

Two participants felt that being nurtured through networking on the job provided a sense of utilization. This type of networking presented itself in different forms; speaking or sharing with other women from all ethnic groups, or just being in the environment with other people who support your views.

Thirdly, participants discussed what determines the real world in terms of what constitutes work and play. Participants spoke of behavior that, consciously or unconsciously, can be self destructive or self defeating. Beliefs and attitudes about creating a positive environment were part of the discussion. Numerous suggestions were given to accomplish this task. "Looking inward," one participant exclaimed, "periodically looking at all your accomplishments, that more than anything, tells me how good I am." Another participant stated, "Look at

things in a positive manner rather than negative; at the end of the day don't concentrate on what I didn't do, but what I did do." Two participants felt the need to pay attention to their successes and learn to celebrate the meaning of achievements in terms of the work contributed to the organization. One participant felt that the meaning of her work was much more important than issues of organizations. As she stated, "I refuse ever to feel like my work is meaningless."

Another participant talked about separating work space and personal space: "Don't extend the work problem into other areas, keep it separate and contained. Then attempt to solve it from that point." Another commented, "Don't take the job home." One participant, in a very quiet and subdued manner, said, "When you close the office door behind you, close it real tight . . . and don't let anything out."

One participant felt that engaging in outside activities, separate from the job, gives one a sense of empowerment. As she explains,

I use my influence to help others to organize political groups. It makes me feel better and puts things in perspective; after all TV is not the real world.

Finally,

I think we need to have pleasure, lots of pleasure, drink, eat, those kinds of things. Get on an exercise regimen. I think the other part for me is hanging out with my girlfriends. Have a boy friend. Pick out a song and dance around in your underwear or put on your sexiest underwear feeling good from the inside out,

are a melody of thoughts shared by the participants for coping.

Miscellaneous responses included creating indicators to know when one is stressed, trusting oneself to create the kind of groundwork needed to confront fear and anger, creating a strong economic base so

that unemployment doesn't become a threat, and, finally developing an adequate level of self confidence.

Section D: Response by Work Categories

Section II

This section groups the responses of the participants according to their work categories. Rather than recreate the information verbatim, I have isolated excerpts to illustrate the important issues. Therefore, all of the responses are direct quotations. To avoid being repetitive in certain areas, one statement will speak for all the participants.

Question 1

How would you describe your experience working for this organization?

Health Care

- Extremely paternalistic, liberal structure, not committed to rules and regulations.
- Competitive with other organizations to attract patients.
- Lack of respect or recognition for ideas, thoughts.

Private

- Very stressful, challenging, indifferent environment, not oriented to individual needs.
- Chaotic because the organization is relatively new.
- Very controlling in terms of the number of White males.

Education

- White male dominated, conservative.
- Exclusionary environment.
- Policies and procedures change from day to day and week to week, thereby making it very confusing and inconsistent.

Media

- All the participants felt that the backstabbing and competitive nature of the environment was brought upon by racist and sexist attitudes of a White male-dominated institution.

Public

- All the participants acknowledged the political and exclusionary nature of the workplace brought about by a White male-dominated institution. One participant claimed that she worked in a bureaucratic environment.

Question 2

Assuming you want to advance your career in the organization, are there major hurdles that may limit your gaining access to these positions? If so, what are they?

Health Care

- Being a Black woman.

- Denial of the opportunity to grow, lack of support, not wanting to give new opportunities.
- No vacant positions.

Private

- Not qualified, need to complete my masters degree.
- Can't advance in a racist and sexist organization.
- Can't advance without being legitimized by the group.

Education

- Thinking of myself as a minority.
- Incompatibility of the Black women in the workplace.
- No desire to advance career.

Media

- All the participants felt that their race and sex contributed to their external hurdles. One participant attributed it to her lack of qualifications in her present position.

Federal Government

- Ideology in opposition to Black women being in top management position.
- Political (I have to change political parties).
- Personal issue (age, being a Black female).

Question 2B

How would you approach the hurdles?

Health Care

- It depends on the situation, individual approach. (Speak to the person in conference).
- Speak to the department head.
- Switch tracks into another division or another field.

Private

- Go back and get my masters degree.
- Approach it in a spiritual way with God.
- You have to have someone in the company advocating in your behalf.

Education

- Start at the preschool/kindergarten level in teaching children not to think of themselves as a minority.
- Is the situation "doable" (incompatibility between the Black women and work environment).
- (If I choose to advance) create your own network of powerful people, enough to counteract the dynamics of the political structure.

Media

- Look outside the organization.
- Recognize the ways the organization functions. Know how to advocate for yourself.

- Set a precedent for the station, do an excellent job, come out with a good product so you become an asset, thereby complementing the organization.

Public

- Go after the position in a way that causes attention.
- Be able to be multifaceted. Be more than qualified for the job.
- Find out about the job. Is it a dead end job, what are the possibilities?

Question 3

In terms of recruitment, selection, and promotion, describe the process that got you to your present position.

Health Care

- I sent a letter to the chairperson of the department.
- I saw an ad in the paper.
- I was asked to come (networking).

Private

- Heard it from a friend (networking).
- I was already in the system on a temporary basis. Head of department advocated for me.
- Networking with a friend who knew someone in the organization.

Education

- Affirmative action officer.
- Recommended by a friend (networking).
- I launched my own national search.

Media

- Entry level position (being persistent/aggressive).
- A friend got me in (networking).
- Existing class action suit against the organization.

Public

- Heard about the job from a friend (network).
- It was networking that got me where I am.
- Networking from another Black women

Question 4

Does your current position match your qualifications in terms of experience and education?

Health Care

- In terms of experience, in terms of education, there's no program to learn discharge planning where you actually get a (BSN) certificate.
- Yes it does (Nursing of Public Health/BSN).
- Yes it does, I have a doctoral degree designed specifically for the curriculum.

Private

- I am qualified in terms of experience, but not in terms of education.
- I am qualified, but not used properly (Masters of Science).
- I am qualified academically (Masters of Science).

Education

- Most definitely I have two masters degrees.
- Yes it does, I have a Masters of Science.
- Yes it does. The position requires a BSN, and I have one.

Media

- Yes and no. When I first came, my background was soft news. I had to learn the business of hard news.
- Yes it matches, I have 9 years in the industry and a BS in communications.
- Yes it matches, I have a masters degree in journalism.

Public

- Yes it does. I am overly qualified. I have two masters degrees and thirteen years in the organization.
- I am overly qualified, but I know I can go higher. I have a Masters of Science and eighteen years in the organization.
- Yes it does. I have a BS and eighteen years in the organization.

Question 5

What contribution has the organization made toward your advancement?

Health Care

- I would say nothing. Anything I acquired here or accomplished, I think I've done in spite of rather than because of their support.
- They made me an offer and I have been able to fulfill.
- The organization has been very supportive in terms of allowing me time to attend seminars on the state and local levels.

Private

- Assumed financial responsibility for travel to conferences; paid for contract recognition as an expert in the field.
- They have done nothing for my advancement, other than educational courses that are offered throughout the organization.
- Allowed me the opportunity to be self-directive, thereby creative.

Education

- None
- Committing resources for time to travel to conferences.
- I don't know if they made any meaningful contributions. Sometimes it becomes confusing because it's not written anywhere (personnel manual) what role the organization plays in this respect. Consequently, you never know what to expect.

Media

- None, only in terms of getting you in the organization, but that's where it begins and ends.
- In the field of journalism, you act as a lone agent. My only obligation is to have a column on a given day and on time.
- I receive critiques from the staff regarding the program I produce. Sometimes I'm given exposure on producing specials for the station.

Public

- The promotion was a help. It made me want to work and accept new challenges.
- They tried to stop my advance, indirectly and directly, by withholding information necessary for my performance.
- To travel and use my own initiative, even though it came out of a bad situation. It's freedom for me.

Question 6

When positions or promotions become available in the organization, how are they communicated throughout the organization?

Health Care

- Posting in a designated area, but I sense that the posting is just to follow through on the regulations.
- Posting in a designated area in a number of ways, (papers, bulletin boards, employee news papers).

- Posting in a designated area; they can't advertise to the outside unless there is a severe shortage.

Private

- Designated bulletin boards, but where you sit on the organization ladder determines how you hear about it prior to posting.

Education

- Organizational gathering and from your friend across campus.
- The boys get to communicate between themselves before you hear about any open positions.
- They have to be communicated to comply with affirmative action regulations but the process is manipulated. There is a lot of networking to advocate the person through. People tend to use the power of their position.

Media

- Designated place for posting, but the positions are already earmarked for someone else.
- They are posted on the bulletin boards, but we have a joke between us. We know the jobs have already been earmarked, especially the good ones.
- They are not posted; you have to have a pipeline to learn about the job and then lobby for yourself.

Public

- Positions are earmarked for someone else, even though they are around.
- Most of the federal government positions are public announcements of vacancies. But in almost every case, people know whether the posting is part of a ritual to fill the requirements of the organization. Usually the person has been selected.
- Information is posted for two or three weeks, but that doesn't mean anything. Positions have been predetermined. Predictable positions for predictable people.

Question 7

What opportunities for advancement does your present position provide?

Health Care

- No opportunities, I would have to switch career tracks. I would have to go into administration or a non-nursing function.
- Very little because there are limited positions in the field of teaching (nursing). There is only one chair person in the department and I don't want that position. I am happy being a level coordinator.
- Probably as a director of three separate companies headed by one person. I am hoping to apply for that job in July.

Private

- My present boss is not leaving so the best I could do would be to start my own department by creating the need for it.
- There is none where I am at; that's why I am looking for something else in the organization.
- Yes there are opportunities, but I need to grow in this position. There are a lot of things that I want to really be proficient in. I need to bridge these gaps before I consider moving up.

Education

- There are no career paths in the department, because it functions as a class-oriented environment. There is a working order in terms of who gets the funding. Faculty get all the recognition, respect and funding. I am considered staff, so my chances for opportunities are limited.
- I am at the top both economically and professionally, and I don't want the top because I am at a different point in my life. What really drives me in terms of where I want to be is being in a place where I can make a difference.
- There are no opportunities in my present position, I would have to go outside the organization for opportunities.

Media

- Very limited because television is a very White, elitist organization and credentials are very important in terms of who moves through the echelons. You can't move through the ranks with

human interest stories or a background that has been formatted working from a Black magazine program, coming from a local public affairs television show or from a game show.

- Not a lot in the context of the organization. It promotes more opportunity outside the organization in terms of writing a book, making speeches, or eventually becoming nationally syndicated.
- The organization has made only superficial contributions and because of that, I had to depend on myself to create my own opportunities. In doing so, I had to hone in on my own survival skills and that for me is their contribution.

Public

- None, unless I want to change my political party; then I could possibly get to the next level.
- Quite a bit, because in my position I manage and coordinate a program. It allows me to do things as a top line manager in terms of setting priorities, budgeting and budget justification and evaluating the performance of staff.
- The only way to advance is to become a Division Director. These jobs are held by White males, and they have been in the positions for the last twenty years. When leave, they bring in friends, family, and associates.

Question 8

What is the racial composition of the workplace, and how does this make you feel? (Author's Note: R indicates the participant's response)

to the first question; E indicates the participant's feelings about the situation.)

Health Care

- R. There are 1,500 people employed by the institution. In the research setting, most of them are from other countries, either European, Russian, or Asian. They are the ones who are the scientists. The physicians are Jewish. I am the only Black female in my division. Most of the Blacks that work there are in Dietary or Housekeeping.
- E. I don't feel that it's to my disadvantage that there are not more Blacks, but I feel uncomfortable in terms of the racial composition.
- R. My particular department has a staff of 12 people and they are all White. They don't have any other racial group.
- E. I have ambivalent feelings about it. I don't think the organization allows or creates an environment where various ethnic people will apply for a position to be hired. There were occasions where there were a couple of Blacks in the organization, but I don't know what happened to them, because they were there for a short period of time which indicates to me that they were not received. When I think about this situation, it does not make me feel good. It makes me angry and bitter.
- R. I am the only Black person in a department which has a faculty of 40 people.

- E. I understand the culture of the workplace, but I become frustrated when new people come into the department and it becomes my responsibility to indoctrinate these people all over again to the fact that I am not a token Black or part of an affirmative action program. You almost get the feeling from the new people that she's all right to talk to. She's not dumb! I really get tired of it, I really do.

Private

- R. I am the only Black female in my division of 600 engineers. I should say the only Black person, male or female.
- E. There is something definitely wrong with our society when it encourages these kinds of dynamics. You can't tell me that there are no other Black engineers that are qualified for this organization.
- R. There are a total of two Blacks in the administrative area where I work and one of them is me. My unit is composed of 20 people. There are more Whites than Blacks, no other racial makeup. Out of the 20 people, there are four to five Blacks to every 20.
- E. It doesn't matter to me what title you have or what you look like, I treat everyone the same. I don't change my personality to suit them. Everyone is equal in my eyes. I challenge it.

Education

- R. I work in a department of 67 people, I am the only Black female

administrator for my department. Other ethnic groups include, two Jewish faculty, one Latino, and one South African male.

- E. There is a deep-seated problem in the hiring practices, and you have to be careful, otherwise you become contaminated by their actions.
- R. There are approximately ten Blacks for every 70 Whites, which is lousy.
- E. There can be no equal representation with these figures. You can't make changes.
- R. I am the only Black female in my department of a staff of 30 people.
- E. I feel good about myself and I don't get intimidated by being outnumbered. I don't let it get in the way of how I feel about myself.

Media

- It's very low. In my division, there is one Black researcher, four Black associate producers, and three black news clerks.
- Business as usual. This is the way it has always been since I have been working for them, and I don't think they are going to change. They don't have to. The 60s are over.
- There are 80 percent White to 20 percent Black; two Black associate producers out of 25, two Black women and no Black men.
- It's something you know exists. It's like a bad picture on the wall. No matter what you do, you have to look at it from time to time.

- There are approximately 50 out of 300. I am talking about professional, reporters, editors, and photographers.
- They haven't settled on a discrimination case that has recently been charged against the organization. It will be interesting to see what happens after the decision is made. I guess I'll just wait and see.

Public

- There has been a reorganization of the people in our department. Out of 20 people, there is a Black male heading the division, with a Black female reporting to him as his assistant. The rest of the department is basically White.
- I have ambivalence about the structure because of the overall scheme of things. The change is a mockery. The department has no political power to negotiate or effect change. It's like them saying to you, 'Okay you have your representation, so what?'
- There are 300 engineers in my division, and out of this group, only 20 percent are Black and 80 percent White.
- I become very angry because I know Blacks are qualified to do the job.

Question 9

What role does your performance appraisal play in becoming eligible for promotion?

Health Care

- I'm not sure. I had the experience of applying for a position. The test of my performance appraisal will come in July.
- Plays a major role in interpersonal skills for my particular role. No matter how much education or qualifications you have, if certain department heads say that you are a person that they feel they cannot work with, then you don't get promoted.
- A large part of the reason I get promoted is because I do very well and they can't deny me. So, for me, performance appraisals play a major role.

Private

- I've never been able to figure that one out. We fill in what we do, what we want to do and most of the time it has no relationship to what we do, or what we say are goals will be for the next year. I was out sick for most of the year and I still got a raise.
- A major component is to make an observation as to how well you have done in a certain area. It is looked at as to whether you will be accepted into a job or not. Other pieces of information from individuals determines whether or not you fit into their department.
- The words in the appraisal don't match the meaning. You're telling me in one breath that I'm good for the organization, that I am a true professional, yet when I look at these words and at my salary that don't match. The words are not equal to the salary.

Education

- I don't know what role it plays, I receive a review every year and it hasn't changed anything. I don't feel anything. I don't know what it is designed to do.
- None, it doesn't play a role. I do it for other people, but I don't have one.
- I think it is real key; I make sure mine is detailed. I do a detailed evaluation of everything that I've done with some progress. What I always want to demonstrate is that I don't need more work, what I need is a different kind of work.

Media

- Performance appraisals don't seem to play a major role in my position because it is not required for the next step--we don't have yearly evaluations. You will find that newspapers are not among the leaders of good management, and because of this, your sense of job security becomes pronounced. Positions are determined by who likes you and who doesn't. The other part is your performance appraisal.

Public

- You are rated on a point system. You are more apt to be successful in getting a job if you have an outstanding performance.
- The one on paper carries the highest weight to determine whether or not you get the position for promotion. It can also determine why you didn't get the job.

- It's very important especially if you manage to get a superior rating. Superior ratings mean extra points either in terms of a promotion or cash awards.

Question 10

Do you find discrimination plays a role in the organization and if so in what ways.

Health Care

- I do. I see it in the form of unequal treatment for the performance of the same behavior. A highly subjective evaluation was given to one Black worker that was not given to a White worker for the same behavior. I know White employees who do that same kind of nonsense and get promoted.
- Yes. There was a Black worker who was competing for the same appointed position as the director of the department. The Black nurse got the job. From that point on her job became hell, and there was no one that stepped out and said this was unfair. The Black nurse finally left.
- When I look around and see no other Blacks besides me, that tells me something, because I know there are Black people who are qualified and I don't see them.

Private

- Yes. They tend to hire below the qualification of the person just because there is a need to fill the quota of Blacks.

- Yes. I think it plays a subtle role, very subtle, around preconceived ideas of what Blacks are supposed to act like, look like and talk like and when you come in and you don't fit the mold, a whole range of reactions take place.
- Expectations are set very high for Blacks in the organization. You have to be able to walk on water and leave footprints and then get to the other side without a row boat.

Education

- Yes, I do. It's systematic from the way the American culture has been nurtured and the way it survives. Subtle and overt. You can work in an organization like mine and never go to lunch with a senior person. Not invited to certain clubs or after 5:00 p.m. for cocktails (happy hour).
- Sexual discrimination, not racial. Even though I was denied a promotion (being qualified) and other candidates were selected out of a pool (one White male and two females), I really feel that the decision was political in the sense that these appointed authorities went with the people they knew.
- It definitely plays a role in the hiring practice because the complexion of the faculty hasn't changed in 18 years.

Private

- I think for me the value of having other folks who look like me around and to be able to access them especially in turbulent times. I also think we need to reach something spiritually every day.

Public

- Yes, I do. I am the only Black female on the professional staff of all White males. I was the lowest grade. I had management responsibilities. When my supervisor left, I took over her job, and I couldn't get a promotion. Now you tell me what that is.
- Yes, I do. I was heavily critiqued for the way I wrote. I was repeatedly asked, where did you learn to write, where did you go to school? Yet my written material was being used by the field staff all across the country and in the home office and by the individual who critiqued me.
- Yes, I do and it is blatant. The White people are briefed before meetings. They are invited to the meetings. They send them to all the important places, so they have all the benefits of the experience. The Blacks, like myself, they can have meetings right under your nose on the things you are working on and they don't invite you into the room. They don't give you information relating to your job. They give you assignments without any background. Black people in the office don't even get spoken to. I have seen Hispanics, Asians, and other minorities come into the same environment and get higher level positions and were not as formally educated and half as smart.

Section III - Recommendations

Question 1

Looking back over the past five years, if you were to do it all over

again, what suggestions would you offer for other young Black women following in your footsteps.

Health Care

- Find a mentor. Find someone who can help you through the maze. Hold people more accountable because if you don't there is no peace inside of you. Even if you upset them, what is there to lose, you are not going to gain anything anyhow. I need to remind other Black women that it is necessary for them to know who they are, where they want to go and in fact that they have to rely on themselves in order to get there and seek out their own network.
- Prepare yourself academically, try to work in a variety of settings and be able to synthesize all these experiences and transfer them to where you are. Try to get a position of power.

Private

- Be honest with them and let them know you are not a wimp, that you stand for what you're doing. You're about doing the work that you're called to do and you're capable of doing it. Be consistent as to what you do and don't be a conformist.
- Here faith and confidence in yourself to develop expertise in some area that, in the future, you can call on. We need to foster the success of other Black women, form support groups. Look at what the company has to offer, what do I need to do to get it, in the way of education, experience, etc. Then go and expect it from them. Don't

go in willy-nilly, like a chicken, go in and expect that they're there to support you.

- Be internally flexible. You may not be in the place that you end up. Let yourself know that you are going to grow. Allow yourself to learn more things and to be curious. Take advantage of a variety of opportunities. Identify with people who are already in the workplace then begin to talk to them. Learn how to have lunch with people in high level positions. Make yourself visible in the organization. Try to access a pipeline in the organization.

Media

- I would have been more aggressive. I think I have a strong sense of myself. I have a strong family that provides support in whatever I do. I know who I am as a Black women so that whatever the organization represents really doesn't mean that much to me because I don't depend on them to define my identity or my self image. I have other things in life like taking a vacation and repotting my plants.
- Push for excellence. Read voraciously. They should read at least four to five newspapers a day. Be psychologically prepared to realize that you are going to be pushing against the odds. Expect to find a great big bottle with a little skinny neck. Have some roots. There are people, because of their power, who will want to say things or write in a way that does a disservice to Black people. Therefore, the less you know of your roots the more likelihood that you will be of disservice to Black people.

- If you know anybody who knows somebody, that's the way to get into the network. Try to find somebody in a position. Even a janitor. Just try to know somebody within the organization. Tenacity. If you want it bad enough, you can't let anything deter you from your ultimate goal. Knowing how to persevere without making yourself a menace or a nuisance.

Education

- One, I definitely would have done my doctorate earlier with no hesitation; it would have made me more marketable. The credentials clearly are still the ticket. Don't stay in a job where you are subject to abuse and attacks, because it wears on you. Don't pick fights with the kings and queens of the organization because you can't kill them. You need to find some organization that you can go to that provides protection and shelter. Go to a job with mutual choosing. They chose you, and you chose them.
- I don't ask someone to follow in my footsteps. I ask them to make their own footsteps as large as they wish and expand themselves and not to put limits on themselves. Know your history. You can't build the future and understand the culture without knowing your history. You must have those pieces or you can't move forward. You will become frustrated and drop out. Know yourself and be proud of yourself. Don't act as a second-class person. Whatever you want to be, be the best there is to be.
- You should have a strong sense of self. Not to get disappointed if you apply for positions and you don't get them. Especially if you

know that you are capable of doing that job and to feel that you're not being recognized for your expertise. Don't stay in a job if not growing, move on. Don't get typecast in doing only a particular type of job because you may not be marketable. Network with people on and off the job.

Public

- I would select a mentor. It shouldn't matter if that person is political or not. You see, it's very important to have support.
- Develop a big hard exterior. Get your armor on, come in prepared to do battle. Have the courage of your convictions. The other thing is networking. Also getting to know the organization and also a commitment of time and the interest to the job. In essence know the nature of the beast. Get to know whether it's a person, a section of the organization, the climate or environment of the organization. Get to know it well. Always remember learning is a life time process.
- Be as prepared as possible and I am not talking about school work. It's in your character. Go in with strong morals and character and stick by them. Don't compromise your morals or your principles or respect at any time. Try to work within the organization in terms of accomplishing goals but at the same time don't lose sight of yourself. Sometimes it is better to let go of the organizational goals if what it's doing to you is ruining your insides. Sometimes you create opportunities if you move on.

Education

- Have lots of pleasure. Drink, eat, get on an exercise regime, get back into meditation. We need to reach some spirituality every day. Every day whether it's a poem or whether you dance around in your sexiest underwear. We need to send each other flowers back and forth. Buy a bouquet of flowers on Monday morning and put them on your desk. Put up limits in establishing boundaries, and the limits are about I don't engage in jokes. Most importantly know your own indicators of when you are getting contaminated in the organization.
- Having a wonderful family and wonderful friends that really nurture and take care of you, during the different developmental stages of your life.
- Strong sense of who I am and feeling very comfortable with that. Have a strong support staff around yourself--networking. Surround yourself around women from different organizations that may be going through similar instances but not necessarily with all one particular race of women. It brings a nice range of professional relationships.

Private

- I think we let people destroy us and allow our jobs to define us. There are lots of outside activities and the balance is very critical to survival.
- Intuitiveness of God. Being in tune to what he wants me to do and in tune to receive what he's given me. No matter what kind of things come up, I know there is peace in it. No matter what kind of

obstacles I encounter I know that he's got something better for me. Praise God.

- Have patience. So that you set unrealistic expectations. To work closely with other people on the job thereby creating "people groups" you can talk to. Otherwise you tend to feel alone.

Question 2

What coping strategies have you developed as you have worked in this organization?

Health Care

- Friends I can trust/networking, growing up Black and living in the south and of course my religion. I am little cooky. I believe that stuff works. I got sisters that I call long distance. We all pretty much are the only Blacks in the system.
- A good network of friends and having a strong sense of who I am. Being a Black female and my role and the legacy that I want to leave behind with my child.
- I say a prayer every morning, look at the positive side as opposed to the negative things. Don't concentrate on what you didn't do but what you did do. I need to socialize with the people at work.

Media

- Separate out work and personal life. When you go home close the door real tight behind you. Don't let anything out. There are other things beside TV. I have to do things outside the job to give

me a little balance. When you can't separate the workplace and your own life-style, you are not living in the real world.

- Being a preacher's daughter, I came up with values of the church, school, home and community. All these values were reinforced and play a significant part in my coping. You need a safety networking in organizations and I feel networking with other people provides that for me.
- Early days of nurturing as a Black female. Having parents and grandparents that always told me I could do anything. That I could become. Have a lot of exposure to a lot of differing experiences in my early childhood. You need the balance so that you feel comfortable walking both sides of the line.

Public

- Everything. The most important is my family, my desire for my children, that definitely helped me to cope. My husband is a very supportive person. For a female I'm very assertive and aggressive but don't get stressed by trying to be everything to everyone. You need to be able to relax and exercise, swim, work on your computer skills at home. You also need someone to talk to in terms of a mentor, or form some kind of organization of Black females who can advise other Black women when they get into a trap on the job.
- I come from a family that had a strong religious basis. Prayer was always a centerpiece of our family. I pray a lot. I get up early in the morning to read my Bible; just to put on the whole armor of God. There is not a day that you cannot go out prepared to do

battle. At one time I was so stressed out that I was taking two medications twice a day. So I changed. My motto is that "I am not going to let you put that stress on me today." My strategy is "I refuse to play your game." Don't even learn the rules. Have your own game plan. Part of this plan is to have a sense of your own identity. Define your parameters and boundaries in relationship to what you will allow to take in and that which you will throw out.

- I am an achiever. Obstacles for me are opportunities to accomplish something. It's wanting to be an achiever and success that keeps me going. But most important, I do have a Christian upbringing and I have friends.

Education

- Networking. I use the group to strategize. It's not a parasitic relationship. It's a mutual agreement to only engage in those kinds of things that count (and if you see me start doing stuff that doesn't count I'm called on it). I think what helps me cope is watching people show up in their truth. Knowing how to choose your wars and your battles. For me I will fight the war on social justice. The war around people being treated as human as possible. In so many years, these organizations ain't going to mean anything. So we got to feel out what is real.
- I think we need to get back to meditation. I think we need to reach some level of spirituality every day either in a prayer, a poem, whether you dance around in your underwear right before you go to work.

- Having a wonderful family, wonderful friends, that nurture and want to take care of you. Expand your friendship pool. I have some friends in all walks of life that have been so supportive of me during different developmental stages of my life. I mean without that you don't survive.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions Black women have of the external barriers that inhibit or impede their occupational achievements in the workplace. As the goal is to understand the shared significance of their perceptions, the presentation is oriented toward the commonality of responses across the five major work categories (health care, education, media, private and public industry) as opposed to the distinction between the groups.

In this chapter, the data gathered during the interviews will be analyzed using the two research questions as a guide to frame the discussion. This study provided the participants with the opportunity to express their perceptions regarding their experiences, and the interview questions were specifically designed to provide the participants with the opportunity to respond to the primary research questions.

The researcher determined there to be one major paradigm which best captured the data as a whole and hence constitutes the framework to discuss the findings: InGroup/OutGroup. Briefly, InGroup/OutGroup refers to the exclusionary experiences of Black women brought about by members of the larger society, that exclusion being based on the former's race and gender. This paradigm was established based on Patton's (1980) criteria for "flushing out" categories. Each category is based on the extent to which data within it hold together and the extent to which the differences between the categories are bold

and clear. Finally, given the fact that the paradigm reflects complex social phenomena, it seeks to describe distinguishable yet clearly interrelated issues. The categories should not be thought of so much as distinct entities, but rather as overlapping topics contributing to the understanding of the social phenomena.

This chapter is organized into three sections. Section 1 identifies the perception of external barriers; Section 2 speaks to the manifestations of these barriers; and Section 3 addresses the perceptions the Black women have of their sense of self.

Section 1: InGroup/OutGroup

It is clear that each of us belongs to various social groups and that each group has characteristics or attributes in common with another. Race, gender, national origin, class and religion are just a few such groups (Allport, 1954). Inherent within these groups are culturally conditioned characteristics that come from patterns of rituals and customs designed to shape and mold our beliefs and attitudes about ourselves and others, including the social group status that is given to men as "dominants" and to women as "subordinates" (Miller, 1976). The precise nature of this status, however, is circumscribed according to certain roles each one is expected to play in society (Allport, 1954). These "predefined" behavioral patterns or conditions have become part of the norm and are part of the social structure inherent in social institutions (Kanter, 1977; Miller, 1967) which contribute significantly to the unequal power relationships that distinguish dominants from subordinates (Goldenberg, 1978).

According to Allport (1954), the norms set by the dominant group produce a knowledge base that not only determines the role and expectations of the dominant and subordinate groups, but also introduces the inclusionary and exclusionary behaviors on the part of the dominant group as to the acceptability of individuals from other groups. The criterion of acceptability sets the dominant group aside from all other groups. By setting the norms and being in a position of power, dominants are able to legitimize this unequal relationship and incorporate it into society's guiding concept (Miller, 1977). Anyone remaining inside these guiding concepts is considered as part of the InGroup. Anyone remaining outside these concepts is seen as part of the OutGroup (Allport, 1954). In this respect, InGroup/OutGroup operates at both ends of the continuum: dominants are seen as part of the InGroup and subordinates are seen as part of the OutGroup. Both aspects of this continuum gain importance through the socialization process because we receive messages that to be part of the InGroup is to be young, rich, educated, healthy and White, while to be part of the OutGroup is to be old, poor, uneducated, unhealthy and Black.

In the United States, the dominant group is made up of privileged, White, able-bodied, heterosexual males who occupy a position of power and, in doing so, have the greatest influence in determining society's cultural outlook, its philosophy, morality, science and social theory (Adam, 1978). Educational institutions, churches, the media, publishing industry, and other social agents serve as conduits of cultural conditioning by continually reproducing the norms of the larger society as set forth by the dominant group (Adam, 1978). Because the dominant

group has established the norm, they become accustomed to viewing society only in terms of that never-changing norm.

According to Stevens (1985), most Whites fear the loss of power and social positions. In an attempt to maintain their control, they create competition over access to scarce resources such as jobs, land, housing and education. When scarcity of resources becomes the issue, the stage is set for inclusionary and exclusionary behaviors to take place. It is also the place where the explanation for many of the Black women's external barriers is rooted. External barriers described by participants as limiting Black women's occupational achievements fall into the categories of: (1) rites of passage/organizational culture, (2) competition, (3) lacking access to informal networks, (4) solo versus token, (5) organization contributions/lack of support, and (6) reactions to the workplace.

Rites of Passage/Organizational Culture

Chester Bernard (1938) described the first modern function of "rites of passages" in working organizations when he observed ceremonies of making known who actually fills a position. Symbolically, the rites of passage regulate, control, and present the core value of the organization that is shared by the dominant members of the organization. This process ensures that only certain members are allowed to gain access to the goods and power of the organization (Goldenberg, 1978).

On the other hand, organizational culture is a possession, a fairly stable set of taken-for-granted assumptions, shared beliefs, meaning and

values that form a kind of backdrop for action (Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, and Martin, 1985, p. 58). The relationship between the terms is seen through the rites of passage acting as a mechanism that selects and filters out individuals that do not fit the preestablished norms of the organization. This process creates a form of ethnocentrism that conforms, supports and defines the culture of the organization.

The socialization to these rites is designed to ensure the inclusion of the "right type," or those that will fit into the organization. Successful socialization or passage depends on two things: (1) the degree to which aspiring members allow the dismantling of their identities in order to fine-tune to the role that is most apt to fit into the organization; and (2) the selection of the individual that is most apt to fit the image of the organization (Trice and Morand). Barmush (1980) speaks of the "core value" of the organization in terms of the "comfort index" that characterizes the corporate image. This core value involves mirroring a reflection of what the organization wants one to look like. Barmush states, "For the Black women who carry the dual 'stigma' of being both Black and female in a society that devalues both, to fit into that index is not impossible, it's just not possible."

The majority of the participants found a similar structure (rites of passage) in their workplace. In order to gain access to certain positions, comments one participant, "You have to be ordained and blessed by the 'good old boy' network. It is as though they have to legitimize you before you gain acceptability in the organization." Other norms not part of the work setting but which were considered as

part of belonging to the "good old boy" network were belonging to the same country club, attending the same social functions, and having gone to the same Ivy League schools.

The attempt to dismantle the identity of Black women and socialize them into the culture of the organization required them to forgo certain ethical and moral beliefs and become part of a group that actively participated in graft and corruption. One participant became involved in a situation where she actually had to "blow the whistle" on a \$5,000,000 scandal. This discussion automatically brought up the issue of being a risk-taker. For some participants, being a risk-taker meant asking two questions: (1) What are my strengths as a risk-taker? and (2) What are my vulnerabilities? The participants saw strength as a risk-taker in "standing in their own truth" regarding certain issues of social justice. Vulnerability for some participants was recognizing the implications of being a Black woman in a patriarchal organization. Because Black women are not as equally valued as White men, becoming a risk-taker takes on an added liability in terms of their occupational achievement.

Other parts of the dismantling process involved colluding in safeguarding White coworkers' reputations. Because the system was not designed for us as Black women, explains one participant, "we do not have a history of belonging which makes me feel there is a built-in mechanism that supports the incompatibility between the workplace and the Black women, and this is a sensitive area where your sense of identity can become contaminated by the activities of the organization."

Examples of the ways in which exclusionary behavior was experienced by the participants included not being invited to lunch, not being advised of the "inside scoop" or how the organization really works, denial of important information, being excluded from casual visits, and being "ghettoized" by their White coworkers. This behavior tends to make participants question whether they can be themselves and belong to the group. The notion of rites of passage introduces the concept of containment because, acting as an extreme barrier, rites of passage tend to limit career potential by restricting the scope of job possibilities. The consequence for Black women is being typecast by virtue of not being able to advance. Therefore, their skills and abilities are not recognized or marketable for future positions. As one participant questioned, "What are my chances of getting another job (just like the one I have) in a racist and sexist society? I don't want to take that chance because I don't think I will be successful."

Competition

The norms governing competitive behavior are part of the dualistic succeed/fail or win/lose mentality of Western society. These types of attitudes force people to depend on someone else's failure for their own gain (Goldenberg, 1978; Yankolwich, 1981). Goldenberg (1978) asserts that economic survival depends on gaining access to limited job resources and opportunities. In this process, competition becomes the norm. Television, for instance, is a very back-stabbing medium. Because things happen quickly in the newsroom, you have to respond

"quickly and competitively" so you learn to step over the "dead bodies," especially those people who try to get in your way.

Being in positions of power, White males tend to make the rules of the game, thereby keeping access to and availability of opportunities and resources out of the reach of the competition (subordinates) by passing the advantage of opportunity to members of the same social group (their offspring, friends or classmates) (Memmi, 1965; Goldenberg, 1978; Yankolwich, 1981). Manipulation of information regarding promotions was an issue for the majority of the participants because they felt that many positions were earmarked for someone more to the liking of the corporate image. Although most of the participants were acutely aware of these barriers, they chose to address them by continuing to do their jobs to the best of their abilities at the risk of over-achieving or confronting the misgivings of the organization. This process became very difficult at times, especially when the participants knew that certain jobs were earmarked for certain individuals. As one participant commented, "It beomes very difficult to compete with a White male who not only makes all the rules of the game but has referees to manipulate the scoring." (Referees are friends in high places.) Even though the participants knew they were qualified for a position, there was a small element of a defeatist attitude. Comments one participant, "Why bother to apply. Most of the time, these jobs are earmarked for their friends so that certain individuals can get a head start--predictable jobs for predictable people." Whereas none of the participants had "high velocity advancements" (Kanter, 1977), this was an indication that the Black women had not won many competitions.

Lacking Access to Informal Networks

A qualified person's chances for employment in the most desirable job openings begins with finding out about these vacancies and becoming part of a pool of candidates (Braddock and McPartland, 1987). A national survey of 4,078 employees was conducted to determine predominant recruitment channels. Their findings indicated two things: (1) the types of jobs to be filled strongly influenced the ways and variety of recruitment methods; and (2) informal recruitment methods that rely upon social networks of information are the most frequently used (Braddock and McPartland, 1987). Other researchers (McCall, 1972; Rossie, Berk and Eidson, 1974) believe that Blacks are systematically denied equal access to the most valuable informal source of job information. This denial tends to segregate Blacks, thereby creating a minority exclusionary barrier.

They believe that Black job seekers are tied primarily to social networks composed of other Blacks who, on the average, do not know about many desirable job openings. Even though three-fourths of the participants had access to informal channels, their responses did not support these findings in that the participants were not connected with a predominately Black social network. One participant, for instance, stated that there was a person who was instrumental in going to the governor and requesting that his replacement (he was resigning) be another Black person. That person became he. Another participant felt that "if it hadn't been for a Jewish woman, I wouldn't have the position I have today."

Among workers with a college degree, chances are significantly greater that job openings will be filled by Whites when social networks are used as a major recruitment strategy (Braddock and McPartland, 1987). Their assumptions were based on the fact that, as the current work force in most college-level jobs is predominantly White, the informal social network of relatives and friends linked to these jobs is predominantly White.

Even though several participants felt that it was absolutely impossible to get to a certain level without someone advocating or promoting their candidacy ("It's networking that got me where I am," recalls one participant. "You just have to have one."), this technique appeared to be restrictive based on the fact that each of the participants was the only Black woman in the workplace. In addition, many participants felt that there is an underlying assumption that those who don't use the traditional channels to gain access into an organization must have some limitation or be deficient in their performance. This tends to place a tremendous strain on the participant who finally gains access via a network to safeguard the reputation of her sponsor by working very hard and trying to fit in. As one determined participant recalls, "He was the person who got me in, but the person that is keeping me there is myself. Myself and my abilities to do the job that has been put before me."

Solo versus Token

Blacks who enter an organization where they are poorly represented are seen as either a solo or a token (Kanter, 1977). A solo in this

context is a single Black individual in a group of Whites, or one of a relatively few Blacks in proportion to Whites in a given work group. There is no stigma attached to their membership in this group. In contrast, token is used to indicate explicitly that the individual was hired because of an affirmative action program. In this case, most White people assume that the individual is less qualified.

Even though both terms mean different things depending on the circumstances, being a solo and/or a token generates a tremendous amount of visibility because, when Blacks enter an organization, they tend to enter one at a time (particularly in the middle and high ranks). Sometimes, employers deliberately scatter Blacks, one per work group, in order to "share the wealth" and make the results of Black recruitment efforts highly visible (Pettigrew and Martin, 1987).

When the participants were asked to recall the racial composition of their workplace, they did not have any difficulty recalling the number and location of other Blacks in the organization, because their numbers were so few. Recalls one participant, "There are approximately 20 Blacks in the entire network; three are located in California, four in Washington, D.C., four in Chicago, five in New York City, two in Florida, and two in Detroit, Michigan." There are hidden dangers to being the only Black person in the workplace. Over a period of time, the individual begins to look at herself as being privileged or exceptional because she doesn't see anyone else mirroring her reflection, and all the attention of her White colleagues is focused on her. This type of mind set can interfere with an interpersonal

relationship with other Black women or men who may enter the workplace, thereby preventing any bonding that could take place.

Consequence of Being a Solo. Some of the issues that are associated with solo Black workers are low expectations, lack of role model, and being part of a critical mass.

Low Expectations. Tied to the belief that when Blacks enter the organization they may not be qualified, Whites often expect Blacks to demonstrate poor performance in their work. These attitudes/beliefs are then easily translated into subjecting Blacks to less challenging assignments. Many of the participants were not surprised or demoralized to find they were perceived as low performers. In many situations, these perceptions served to motivate the participant to excel in her job performance. In fact, many of the participants accepted difficult assignments as a challenge and turned them into positive and rewarding projects. Comments one participant, "I don't look at rejection as a negative experience. For me, it's a challenge to turn it into something positive." Another recalls, "They were astonished to find that I could write and succeed at publishing the field manual that is currently being used nationwide. When I first asked to take on the project, they said, 'What for? It's been tried before, and no one has been able to put one together.'"

For other participants, being the only Black person on the job had some drawbacks--for them it created a sense of "being watched." Sometimes this sense causes the solo to feel that she has to be a better performer than her White co-worker (Fernandez, 1982). Thus,

participants often felt that they really had to excel to be perceived as doing a good job: "You have to be better than the rest, just to be on the same level as the average White person. If you can get into a management position with the right credentials and the right skills, you still have to perform at 150%."

For most participants, these attitudes are the culmination of messages and early conditioning they received as young girls, such as, "I've been programmed that you've got to be better than the rest if you want to get ahead," and "You can be anything you want to be, but you have to be the best." The perception of low expectations sometimes, though not in this case, tends to introduce the centipede syndrome, or the idea that self-confidence can be reduced by the perception of incompetence which, in itself, is an inducement to failure. However, contrary to the expectations and perceptions of low performance, several participants felt that they had actually performed at a level in excess of what the job required. "When my supervisor quit," said one, "I did her job and my job at the same time, and without being paid for the extra work."

Role Model/Stereotypes

Since it is unlikely that Black women will occupy high positions in an organization, they cannot be available to serve as a role model for lower-level Black women. In the absence of role models, it becomes difficult, in light of preconceived stereotypes that are held by members of the larger society, to achieve a positive image that mirrors the reflection of a successful Black woman. What tends to happen is that

Black women spend a considerable amount of time overcoming negative images that have already been created.

Stereotypes burden the minority with questions about lack of intelligence, ability, and social and cultural similarity to the dominant White (Fernandez, 1981). On the other hand, despite the paucity of role models, most participants felt good about themselves in the workplace. According to one,

I'm comfortable with being who I am, but each time new people come into the department, I end up having to indoctrinate these people all over again that I'm not the token Black. I get sick and tired of going through the motions of trying to prove that I am not dumb or stupid and, yes, I am alright to talk to. It takes them a while to figure out that I'm here because I do my work.

Several participants felt that White males' exposure to Blacks is very circumscribed. They don't appear to have any other exposure to Blacks except what they see in their immediate circles or what they see in the newspapers or watch on television. Therefore, they don't have the opportunity to see Blacks in any other role outside of their preconceived notions of them. According to Snyder and Contor (1979), once stereotypical beliefs are established, individuals are extremely resistant to change, even in the face of contrary evidence. Participant comments reinforce this theory:

"A physician told me one day that I didn't sound Black and that my values appeared to be closer to theirs."

"I am reminded periodically from my White co-workers how neat and clean I look coming to work."

After being in the position of Assistant Professor for six years, I finally realized the way to get out of the Assistant Professor rank was to go get the Doctorate. It got me out of the position

by title but not in terms of job discretion, autonomy, and responsibilities. I could be doing more than I'm doing now. I could be far more creative and productive, but I don't have the opportunity.

If a qualified minority group member cannot escape a negative racial group stereotype in the workplace, the resulting exclusionary behavior may contribute to that person being denied an equal employment opportunity.

Being Part of a Critical Mass

According to Blanchard (1989), "the potential to create an environment absent of discrimination may not be only inherent in action but in numbers." To illustrate this concept, he creates a setting in which there are 16 people in a room, one of whom is Black; the others are White. He then hypothesizes that each White person makes only one insensitive comment per month. Each of these 15 Whites targeting the same Black person nearly every other day is the reality for an unrepresented Black person. This phenomenon creates a critical mass of energy working against this person on a daily basis.

Putting aside for a moment the issue of insensitive or hostile remarks, the numerical imbalance inherently works against racial harmony in the workplace. One participant articulates the problem thusly, "You see, they don't need to know who I am when there are so many of them to relate to." Being part of a critical mass sometimes conjures up emotional feelings that get played out in certain actions. As one participant recalls,

Sometimes I find that I am always on the defensive, waiting for every word to be said. It really became a draining situation.

When I become overwhelmed, staying home and watching soap operas rather than coming to work is therapeutic for me.

Reactions to the Perceptions of the Workplace

When White individuals continue to exhibit forms of discrimination and fail to understand the impact inherent in their practices and action, some type of reaction on the part of their victims is inevitable (Braddock and McPartland, 1986). Evidence of a reaction to the external barriers on the part of participants appeared to parallel the findings of Pettigrew (1964) when he identified three categories of reaction to oppression, namely: "moving toward," "against," and "away."

The first of these, moving toward, characterizes the individual who seeks full acceptance as an equal human being. The second, moving against, includes the familiar "fight or flight" patterns, while moving away involves numerous types of avoidance reactions (Pettigrew, 1964). Pettigrew defines moving toward as the process of constantly trying to adapt to being treated in a discriminatory manner. Reactions of these participants included assertive behavior as they recognized the need to intervene on their own behalf, and seek out and confront the individual of power or influence. Several participants demonstrated assertive behavior by challenging the individual who had the power and authority to make the change. "I would sit down in conference one on one with the person so that they would know the justification of my complaint."

Pettigrew defines moving against as the process of aggressively moving to eliminate discriminatory acts. This reaction was exhibited by those participants who chose to look outside the organization in search of alternatives to solve their problem. Three of the participants were

forced to seek outside agencies to act as a mediator for their particular situation. One worked through the NAACP and then the mayor's office; one asked her district counselor to intercede on her behalf. One participant had an all too familiar story.

I applied for a position and when I didn't hear anything for three months, I contacted the employer. We went around and around for two more months after that initial contact. I finally had to contact the affirmative action office to intercede on my behalf. I was hired into the position three months later.

Moving away is defined by Pettigrew as psychologically or physically choosing to withdraw or disconnect from the organization in order to eliminate or reduce the possibilities of further rejection. Participants sought alternatives in their career development by creating their dreams and opportunities outside the organization. One spoke of returning to school. Another noted that she doesn't "depend on the organization to fulfill my aspirations. I seek mine from outside the organization. Sometimes this is found in community activities or special projects that I find to do."

Section 2: Manifestation of External Barriers

In the past, whenever social scientists studied the inclusion or exclusion of Blacks from predominantly White organizations, the analysis of the problem focused on the formal structure of the organization, i.e., hiring practices (Braddock and McPartland, 1987, p. 47). Since then, other researchers have become increasingly concerned about the inclusion/exclusion of Blacks once they are inside the organization (Pettigrew and Martin, 1989), in terms of the number and degree of

rewards, resources, and opportunities (Levitin, Quinn, Stainer, 1971).

Thirty years ago, signs and symptoms of prejudice and discrimination were blatant and easy to recognize or uncover; however, since the advent of the civil rights and women's movements, the traditional forms of discrimination are more subtle. These are what Pettigrew and Martin call "modern forms of prejudice and discrimination" (1987). Other social scientists underscore Pettigrew and Martin's concept in stating that "racism has not gone away." They claim its expression has become more "subtle and indirect." The majority of the participants could not account for any blatant forms of racism or discrimination (except for unequal representation), but they could account for subtle forms of discrimination. Most of them experienced discrimination on a variety of levels; but as one participant observes, "It's just in small ways that you know race is a factor."

Often the Black person involved is the only person in a position to draw the conclusion that discriminatory practices are taking place (Pettigrew and Martin, 1987). Unbeknownst to White individuals, for instance, many of the participants were keenly aware of the differential treatment they received from their White colleagues. This treatment manifested itself in the following ways: lack of support, performance appraisals, issues of containment, and withholding/manipulation of information.

Lack of Support/Sponsorship

Black managers do not have the same opportunities as White managers for promotion. It is common knowledge among White managers that "pull

with or sponsorship by top management proves helpful in the cause of advancing in the organization" (Fernandez, 1987, p. 103). Black managers are less likely to have access to those resources because potential mentors (most of whom are White) tend to choose proteges who are similar to themselves in social backgrounds (Ilgen and Youtz, 1986; Kanter, 1979) and who do not constitute any personal or professional risk to the sponsor (Fernandez, 1981).

Two-thirds of the participants gained access to the workplace through the efforts of sponsorships operating either inside or outside the organization. Once inside the organization, however, the benefits of sponsorship tended to end. One participant remarked that "There was a person who was instrumental in getting me in the door, but that's where it began and ended. Now I'm the only person advocating on my behalf." The likelihood that Black women will move up the hierarchical ladder is limited because, according to Hennig and Jardin (1979, p. 106), "Sponsors select sponsorees, not the reverse."

Performance Appraisals and Promotability

Performance appraisals can do one of two things; they can act as a deterrent or provide a window of opportunity for minorities, women and other token employees toward gaining access to growth, prospects, aspirations and power. (Kanter, 1979, p. 65)

Harlan A. Weiss (1982) sees performance appraisals as "cultivated opportunities" in order to embrace the prospects for promotions or opportunities to negotiate career strategies. With very few exceptions, the responses of the participants to this issue seem to suggest that performance appraisals were not a significant factor in their

advancement or lack of advancement. Their conclusions stemmed in part from the failure of the organization to incorporate the concept of performance appraisals into its present structure. The supervisors' choice to forego a system of consistent performance appraisals resulted in an environment of uncertainty and insecurity. As one participant commented, "Performance appraisals are not given regularly and you don't know when to expect them." Another participant felt that "Performance appraisals have nothing to do with promotions. They either like you or they don't. Even if you are competent and they don't like you, you will have a difficult time crossing over."

Most of the uncertainty about performance appraisals concerned the absence of work-related cues; quotes one participant,

I've never been able to figure this out. They do it every year, we fill in what we want to do, and most of the time it has no relevancy to what we do consequently. There is no real measurement of my ability or competency.

There were only two participants who could tie their promotions directly to their performance appraisals. One participant felt that "Positive performance appraisals without rewards in the form of a promotion become very dangerous to the individual if allowed to take place over a certain period of time." Remaining in the same position empowers them more and empowers us less" because of the individual's inability to change or influence the direction of the occupational achievement. As one participant comments, "When the process takes place, we have stayed longer than we should."

Individuals who are not comfortable with being inadequately rewarded or recognized tend to leave their current positions and seek employment

elsewhere (Mobley, 1982; London, 1981). March and Simon spoke to the perceived desirability of movement from the organization. They stated that, "Dissatisfaction arises from a disparity between reality and the ego ideal held by the individual. The greater the disparity, the more pronounced the desire to escape from the situation." In the case of the participants, four of them were actively looking for employment elsewhere.

Finally, there were a few participants who worked in organizations where there were direct relationships between performance appraisals and promotions. These women had learned to place a tremendous amount of effort into everything they did on the job. According to one participant,

I think the performance appraisal is the real key because I make sure mine is very detailed. I just don't stick to one sheet that says 'dah, dah, dah.' I do what I call a perspective of everything that I've done with some progress. So I have that great yardstick. What I want to demonstrate is that I don't need more work; what I need is a different kind of work.

Issues of Containment

Most of the participants in this study quickly realized the severely limited prospects for occupational achievement. Part of the problem is a patriarchal system that is not structured to give a lot of validation, recognition, and respect to the performance of Black women. According to the participants, White males are prevented from seeing Black women in other than stereotypical roles and "without reciprocal recognition, there can be no identity, no self-worth, no dignity" (Fanon, p. 114). For example, three participants were given assignments that dealt with human interest stories, particularly involving Black issues. This type

of story is considered "soft news." The assumption in many White circles is that only Blacks can talk about Black issues or that they should only talk about Black issues, or that we don't have any other interests outside of ourselves. In other words, "there isn't any need for me to develop more expertise in other related fields or even to consider 'Hey, I got bright ideas around something I think we ought to be doing, and I'm the one that wants to do it.'" Bernice Powell, President of the Coalition of 1,000 Black Women, states that,

The majority of positions relegated to Black females, such as public relations on issues dealing with community affairs (soft news) are seen as minority-related areas, because once in them, it is difficult to move into positions where more technical skills and advanced degrees are required. (Simpson, p. 85)

Participants in the present study had formal education, including college level and advanced degrees. Still, the consequences of remaining in these positions led to being typecast and thus not marketable for potential advancements inside or outside the organization.

Withholding/Manipulation of Information

Historically, organizations in the United States have been structured hierarchically. This type of structure generally works to protect the privileged members of the dominant social group (Scott and Hardy). To maintain their positions of power, dominant groups strive to maintain control of power and resources. One form of power is the control of information. Information regarding promotions, for example, tends to be manipulated or withheld to prevent certain social group

members (such as Black women) from gaining access to or pursuing social and economic resources.

The majority of participants were aware that information regarding advancement or promotion was being withheld from them. Fourteen of the participants stated that when promotions became available they were posted, but nine of the 14 stated that the organizations were only going through the motions because the positions were really earmarked for someone else. "The boys get to communicate between the boys first before anyone else hears about it," one participant remarked. "Most of the time, these jobs have been circulating before posting so that certain individuals can get a head start."

Alienation and Isolation

In determining opportunities for advancement, those who wield power in organizations often rely on outward appearances to determine who is the right sort of person (Barmash, 1980), those who fit in, those they see as their kind (Kanter, 1977). Homogeneous networks operating in organizations reinforce the unwillingness of their members to incorporate heterogeneous elements, such as women, within them (Kanter, 1977). Entrapped in a double bind of being both Black and female, Black women become doubly invisible (Lerner, 1973; Hook, 1981).

Other factors contributing toward this "invisibility" stem from the participant being denied the opportunity to participate fully in the activities of the organization. "Bonding with others is so basic that, without it, neither development of self or life is possible. Identity provides the anchor for individuality and continuity with others"

(Fanon, 1985, p. 103). The outcome of this process leads to a form of alienation because of the absence of any external conformation of one's existence. Ultimately, Black women in this situation become a world unto themselves.

Two forms of isolation took place for the participants, that which the individuals chose for themselves (voluntary) and that which was imposed upon them (involuntary). Several Black women were physically separated from the activities of the organization by being placed in areas where they couldn't be seen. One observed, "If you have a supervisor that doesn't have much use for you or you become a threat to her position, you are set off in a corner to do busy work by yourself." Another notes that she didn't have an office for several months: "My desk was actually located in a hallway away from my working area." Being barred from participating fully in the activities of the organization, Black women are deprived of essential information they need to get the job done. Exclusion may also have a delayed effect on job performance. According to one participant,

For two years I came to work without any meaningful assignment. I just sat at my desk and did nothing. I thought to myself, 'If they want to pay me for doing nothing, that's okay with me.' But after a while, I didn't enjoy coming to work, so I had to demand that I receive meaningful work.

Voluntary isolation involved participants who had a particularly strong sense of their work identity. For these participants, being able to define how they wanted to work was very important. One stated, "Isolation was a choice for me because it best defined how I wanted to

work. Now that they know I am a self-starter, they leave me alone. To me, it's freedom."

Section 3: Sense of Self

While this research was not designed to examine the theme of "sense of self," the participants addressed this issue so frequently that the researcher decided to examine it more fully. The theme of sense of self emerged from two interview questions that were primarily designed to (1) create a social profile of the participant; and (2) elicit recommendations for other Black women. The responses to these questions brought forth a multitude of self-descriptions of what Collins and Sussewell (1986) label self referents. These responses provided additional insight with which to examine how these Black women defined the reality of their world view.

According to Collins and Sussewell (1986), understanding and defining what it means to be African-American and female has always been a difficult undertaking. One factor contributing to this difficulty is that the Black women experience their African-American culture within a predominately White society. This phenomenon creates a dual consciousness or bicultural perspective between the expectations of the African-American community and the larger society, creating a struggle as to which one becomes the dominating force in her self-definition (Miller, 1977).

Out of the historical presence of the Black woman in America emerged multiple self referents. Brown-Collins and Sussewell categorized these referents under three headings: psycho-physiological referent, African

referent, and myself referent. These headings provide an elementary framework to analyze the different perceptions these Black women had of their sense of self.

Psycho-Physiological Referent

This category pertains to the Black woman's knowledge of herself as a woman. Gilligan (1982) observed that women create their self-definitions as women first through the attachments with their mothers and also as mothers through the relationship with their children. Responses of the participants generally supported this observation. Most of the participants spontaneously began talking about themselves in relation to others, i.e., family, spouse, children, friends, and community. Some women spoke of a burning desire to work for their children. "What has kept me on track or what has kept me focussed is my family. There is a strong, burning desire to work for my children because that's where it counts." Other participants spent a large amount of money on long distance telephone calls to siblings for a supportive relationship. Another participant even learned how to live and appreciate her life from her neighbor. Yet another participant found a sense of reciprocal interaction in the ways she stays connected to the community. "Some of the ways I stay connected is periodically to give back to the community," she states. "Sometimes I participate in programs by helping the community to organize themselves to be more successful. This gives me joy--this gives me satisfaction."

African Referent

Identification with an African heritage provides a sense of group identity. Sense of self under this heading brings with it a sense of "us" or "we" which signifies and expresses a collective experience of being Black. "I am because we are; therefore, I am" (Noble, 1973). Consequently, "an individual is the group and the group is the individual" (Brown-Collins and Sussewell, 1986).

Whatever experience individuals have outside the group tends to find its way back to the group because there is a certain universality, a certain zone of comfort contained in the group that comes with being Black. Explains one participant,

I think being a Black person permits you to move through a Black group without having to explain what it is you're feeling or why you're feeling that way. I think that is very essential and so when I'm feeling isolated, having a Black husband and a few Black people in town, we can talk about my situation by going straight to the heart of it. I can go home and say, 'Do you believe what they did today?' and he understands.

Group identity was also expressed by the participants' sense of affiliation with a group of people who mirror their own reflection of themselves. All the participants chose to describe themselves as Black women or as African-American women. One woman states,

I describe myself as an African-American woman because I think that is something I am not willing to change or exchange or to give up in any way or fashion. It seems like the older I get, the more balanced I become in understanding the history of all those years that Black women were left alone to serve in non-traditional roles. Where all that fits for me is that I get to borrow all of it. I get the best of all that these Black women represented, and I find a sense of gratification in claiming the heritage and legacy of being Black and its free claiming.

Finally, several participants were cognizant of another aspect of their African legacy. For them, being Black made them feel a part of the historical forces that had shaped and molded their lives. For one participant, being able to look back on the history of Black women in the United States is "so helpful because I know the ingredients of fortification."

Another African referent that emerged as part of the multiple self referent was the "okay self" or that part of the identity that gives one a sense of "feeling good about yourself from the inside out." Feeling good about their identity, several participants inextricably tied their "okay self" to the type of work they did and the sense of pride in their achievements. As one participant put it, "I refuse ever to think that my work is meaningless. I refuse to say that the kind of work I do and my presence in the organization is meaningless." For another participant, feeling good about herself acted as a form of empowerment.

Our empowerment comes out of our proudness and the contribution we make to the organization, and if we don't have pride we can't access our empowerment. And finally, I always believed in myself. I always feel good about myself and always feeling strong within myself. I never believe anything from anybody that might diminish how I feel about myself.

Myself Referent

What is it about a Black woman that makes her so unique? Overall, the uniqueness of the Black women in this study was demonstrated by their ability to be part of two cultures, i.e., European and African-American, and to maintain the roles and expectations that come with each culture. In an attempt to maintain membership in each culture, conflict ensues as to which culture will dominate the

life-style of the Black woman (Miller, 1978). Without discarding the cultural characteristics of both, the Black woman is faced with the uncomfortable task of balancing both cultures as part of her life-style. One impact of this phenomenon is that Black women resort to coping strategies to sustain their spiritual, emotional and intellectual wholeness in the workplace; at the heart of their coping strategies is religion.

According to Naim Akbar, (1976, p. 184), "the most consistent characteristic of Black people throughout the world is their fervent belief and practice in some form of religion." This statement was supported by the majority of the participants who could account for religion being a part of their daily lives since early childhood. Recalls one participant, "Prayer was always a centerpiece of my family life. My father used to read poetry, also. Now I read the Bible every day."

From that point on, religion became the pivotal force from which all other forms of the participants' characteristics evolved. Many of the participants, through religion, developed a strong sense of confidence in situations where they had no control. As one participant puts it,

I have a positive perspective that anything God wants me to have, I'm going to get it. And one job let-down does not mean that that's the end. It means I have higher things to go to because whatever He's preparing me for, it's going to be much higher than that.

Religion not only provided confidence but stamina and solitude against a hostile environment in the workplace. It became a means of dissipating a lot of pent-up anger and frustration. Having a strong

religious belief also provided certainty in the face of uncertainty. As one participant explains, "You have to put on the whole armor of God and be prepared to do battle in a spiritual way, so you don't get bruised and you don't bruise them."

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Findings

In order to examine the external barriers that limit or impede the occupational achievements of Black women, the researcher asked a series of 15 questions of 15 Black women representing five major work categories, health care, private and public industry, media, and education. Responses to these questions were reviewed and organized into one major category for analysis: InGroup/OutGroup.

Participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) self-identified Black woman of predominately African descent; (2) at least 30 years of age; (3) born and raised in the United States; (4) at least four years of college education; (5) working for a predominately White institution at least four years; and (6) currently working in a managerial position. Sample size was held at 15 due to the nature of the interview as a data collection tool.

Data were collected through a combination questionnaire/interview procedures. The questionnaire sought background information on the nature of the participant's demographic profile, i.e., age, marital status, salary, length of time in the organization, number of promotions in the organization, and the types of organization. For the interview itself, the researcher prepared and pilot-tested an interview guide designed to collect specific information and encourage the open exchange of opinion. Following the pilot test, questions were modified slightly and distributed to the participants prior to the interview to allow for

forethought. Interview sessions lasted approximately 60-120 minutes and were tape recorded with the participant's full consent.

Participants demonstrated an eagerness to talk about their working experiences. Many of the participants felt that this process served as a therapeutic tool by allowing them to vent their pent-up anger and frustrations. A number of participants thanked the interviewer at the end of the session for the opportunity to express their feelings and share their experiences on the issues.

During the second phase of the study, the tapes were transcribed, data was categorized, and a coding system was devised from a subsample of four of the interviews. From the initial themes identified via the coding system, one typology or major theme was systematically determined to capture the whole of the data: InGroup/OutGroup. Two independent coders verified the accuracy of data placement in each category for the four sample cases. The one aforementioned category constitutes the framework for the analysis of the data and is summarized briefly during the discussion and conclusion section of this chapter.

The following is a summary of participants' responses to the 15 questions posed in the interview. Due to the sheer mass of data accumulated, only the three most frequently cited responses will be presented here. Chapter IV should be consulted for a complete overview of the findings and the full text of the question.

Summary of Responses

<u>Category</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
SECTION I.	
<u>Question 2:</u> If you were to describe yourself; what would be important for people to know about you?	
<u>Items relating to being a black woman</u> of African descent.	11
<u>Items relating to a sense of self</u> in terms of having pride in their achievements and accomplishments, giving themselves value and recognition for their success and achievements.	7
<u>Items indicating a strong orientation to being religious or spiritually</u> connected to themselves and others.	*
* Expanded upon in the section for recommendations.	
SECTION B.	
<u>Question 1:</u> How would you describe your experience working for this organization?	
<u>Items relating to an exclusionary experience</u> in terms of not fitting the norms or criteria for acceptance into the "good old boy" network.	8
<u>Items relating to a competitive environment</u> in terms of the culture of the organization and the nature of the participant's position.	6
<u>Question 2:</u> If you wanted to advance your career in this organization, are there major hurdles that may limit your gaining access to these advanced positions; if so, what are they?	
<u>Items indicating the "rites of passage"</u> by being a team player, having one's presence legitimized by members of the group.	9
<u>Items indicating a position of containment</u> that limits a range of free movement in terms of career mobility.	6
<u>Question 3:</u> What would be some of the ways you would address these hurdles?	
<u>Items reflecting individual confrontation</u> , to negotiate their needs in terms of reactions.	6

<u>Category</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Items reflecting certain behaviors of participants in relationship to the hurdles: disconnecting from the organization and finding other alternatives for their own growth and career development.</u>	4
<u>Question 4: In terms of recruitment, selection and promotion, describe the process that got you to your present position.</u>	
<u>Items indicating networking: having knowledge of information from someone in the organization regarding an open position.</u>	12
<u>Items indicating networking: having knowledge of information from someone outside the organization who had contacts inside the organization.</u>	6
<u>Items indicating the traditional process of gaining access to organizations: classified ads, applications, personnel.</u>	3
<u>Question 5: Does your current position match your qualifications in terms of your education and experience?</u>	
<u>Items reflecting the qualifications of the participants in terms of education and experience.</u>	14
<u>Items reflecting the lack of recognition and respect on the part of the organization.</u>	9
<u>Items indicating the treatment in terms of underutilization of the participant's skills and ability.</u>	8
<u>Question 5B: What additional aspirations do you have for your career in this organization?</u>	
<u>Items indicating participants who chose to leave the organization because of the workplace being an unhappy place to work.</u>	5
<u>Items indicating participants who chose to stay with the organization but had no aspirations because of age, salary, length of time with the organization.</u>	4
<u>Items reflecting participants who chose to realize their aspirations within the organization, carving out different channels, creating a position for themselves, happy with present position.</u>	3
<u>Question 6: What contributions has the organization made toward your advancement?</u>	

<u>Category</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Items suggesting a lack of support on the part of the organization: participant gaining access on an entry level, organizational support in terms of providing time and finances for travel.</u>	9
<u>Items suggesting the presence of organization support: promotions, freedom to identify their own creative work style.</u>	4
<u>Question 10: What role does performance appraisals play in become eligible for promotion?</u>	
<u>Items indicating a vague perception regarding the role the performance appraisal played.</u>	10
<u>Items indicating the value performance appraisals have: promotions, job security, personal and professional growth.</u>	5
<u>Question 11: Do you feel discrimination plays a role in the organization and, if so, in what ways?</u>	
<u>Items suggesting racial discrimination in terms of: hiring practices as they relate to unequal representation (solo vs. token).</u>	8
<u>Items suggesting racial discrimination in terms of: treatment, exclusionary behavior.</u>	7
<u>Items suggesting racial discrimination in terms of: stereotypical images of Blacks.</u>	3
<u>Question 7: When positions of promotion become available in the organization, how are the communicated?</u>	
<u>Items indicating the posting of information in a designated area.</u>	14
<u>Items indicating the withholding of information necessary for the participant to inquire about the open position, a preselection process.</u>	9
<u>Items indicating the non-posting of information due to the culture of the organization.</u>	2
<u>Question 8: What opportunities for advancement does your present position provide?</u>	
<u>Items relating to the behaviors of participants who choose to switch career tracks to create opportunities.</u>	6

<u>Category</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
<u>Items relating to the behavior of participants who chose to leave the organization: issues around race, gender, and class.</u>	5
<u>Items relating to the behavior of participants who choose not to switch career tracks: political nature of job.</u>	3
<u>Items relating to the behavior of participants who chose not to advance their careers in the organization because of a change in the perspective of the individual's life-style.</u>	3
<u>Question 9: What is the racial composition of the workplace?</u>	
<u>Items indicating a lack of equal representation in comparison to other ethnic groups in the workplace.</u> Response to the question reflected the participant's Being the only Black woman in the designated position for her division.	3
<u>Question 9B: How does this composition make you feel?</u>	
<u>Items indicating the description of the participant's feelings toward the racial composition of the workplace:</u>	
Feelings of defensiveness.	5
Feelings of anger.	3
Feelings of indifference.	1
Feelings of ambivalence.	1
Feelings of frustration.	3
Feelings of guilt.	1
Feelings of comfort.	1

Discussion and Conclusion

It is not the intent of this researcher nor this study to make sweeping statements of fact about all professional Black women relative to their external barriers. However, it does appear feasible to select certain recurring themes which were found here and which were echoed in other research by which cautious generalizations can be made. Moreover, these themes can, in turn, guide individuals to consider the appropriate

channels that best serve to communicate this information to other Black women.

One major area, InGroup/OutGroup, was determined to be critical in understanding external barriers to Black women's occupational achievement. InGroup/OutGroup refers to the exclusionary experiences of Black women brought about by members of the larger society, that exclusion being based on the former's race and gender.

Belonging to the InGroup acts as a form of entitlement because individuals seeking membership can do so only through the "rites of passage." This process ensures that only certain members are allowed to gain access to the goods and power of the organization in the form of jobs, promotions, and salary increments. The socialization to these rites is designed to ensure the inclusion of the "right type" or those that will fit into the organization.

The core value of an organization involves mirroring a reflection of what the organization wants one to look like. The Black woman who carries the dual stigma of being both Black and female in a society that devalues both is an unlikely candidate to fit into that index. By not fitting into that index, Black women are denied the opportunity to define the terms of their occupational achievements.

In conclusion, the external barriers to Black women's occupational achievements are part of a complex interplay between the individual and the organization. Efforts to help Black women realize their full occupational potential can be met only through a systematic approach to training and education, both on the part of members of the organization

and Black women. It is only through this kind of dual effort that occupational achievements of Black women will improve.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study generated a number of ideas and insights for investigation into future studies. Due to the preliminary nature of this study, many of the findings summarized in the previous section require further testing with a larger population gleaned from different occupational levels and social backgrounds. For example, this study speaks only to professional Black women. Clearly, a more in-depth and systematic analysis of differences among Black women from varying occupational backgrounds needs to be conducted. In addition, studies must be conducted to examine the external barriers of other ethnic groups to determine their similarities to and differences from Black women. Studies might also examine whether certain external barriers are more characteristic of certain major work categories, e.g., private, public health care, education, and the media. In addition, studies could be conducted to examine the firm intentions of organizations around policies for recruitment, selection, and succession of positions. Other potential avenues of research are outlined below.

This study found a number of factors that contributed to the external barriers of Black women. Examples include rites of passage, lack of support, manipulation of information, and issues of containment. Future research may seek to examine whether these factors affected the occupational achievement of other successful Black women, and if so, the strategies they developed to overcome these barriers.

Also problematized by this study was the whole notion of success. Different participants defined it in terms of their title, salary, level of education, association with the organization, the ability to survive in the organization, or the ability to be promoted. Because success meant so many different things for so many of the participants, their perceptions should be examined as should their early experience associated with success, achievement, and competence and the role the Black family played in the process.

One prevalent theme to emerge in this study was the participants' sense of self. Along with all the other issues, sense of self was considered a salient factor to guide, direct, and influence their ethical and moral decisions-making process of the Black women but often conflicted with the overall ways job-related decisions were made. This observation suggests that further examination of Black women's concept of decision-making would be useful in determining the additional ways this process may have an impact on them and, as employees, the goals of the organization, both positively and negatively.

This study also underscored the unique cultural position of Blacks in America. That is, through their responses, the participants revealed the tension of trying to form a cultural identification in a society particularly prejudiced against their race. In an attempt to maintain membership in both European and African-American cultures, conflict ensues as to which culture will dominate their life-style (Miller, 1978). It was found that some participants did not feel comfortable when they engaged in social activities with other Black colleagues for fear of being subjected to insensitive remarks. Given that this study

discovered rather than tested for this phenomenon, a fruitful avenue of research would be to examine additional ways this limit on social interaction affects Black women, both positively and negatively.

Lastly, this study found that even though many Black women spent a considerable amount of time and energy focusing their attention on their treatment in the workplace, they also tended, perhaps ironically, to shift their attention away from the concerns of the organization and toward other events and activities. Research in this area could focus on a tool to measure the loss of production to the organization whenever all of its employees are not fully employed in the activities or events operating in the workplace.

Implications for Professional Black Women

The overall aim of this study is to provide professional Black women with accurate information that not only allows but prepares them to understand the nature of the workplace. It is also intended to provide information designed to assist them in making informed decisions, increasing their effectiveness, expanding their range of options, and reflecting on the type of skills, techniques, and strategies needed to be satisfactorily employed.

Although this study tends to center around the vulnerability of professional Black women, it was also an opportunity to witness their strengths and validate their perseverance in the face of overwhelming adversity.

Implications for Organizations

By the year 2000, 80 percent of the entering labor force will be comprised of immigrants, women, and people of color (Barringer, 1991). This simple fact will cause turmoil for some organizations because of their failure to create a cultural arrangement that speaks to the inclusion and linkages of all its diverse members.

The challenge to organizations is how to include all of their members fully and completely in their activities. Organizations will need to take a radical approach in designing programs that speak to an organizational culture that is not gender- or race-biased. These programs should highlight information that speaks less about organizations and more toward accomplishing change. The success of the organization should be defined by its ability to value both its own internal priorities and the needs of its employees. One approach could develop programs designed to create project teams composed of different ethnic groups from a variety of organizational levels. This would provide each group with insight into the performances of the other and, at the same time, would help to break down perceived stereotypes.

Of course, this approach leads some Whites to feel disenfranchised or less entitled to the same privileges prior to the inclusion of other ethnic groups. Therefore, organizations have to continue to engage in the process of breaking down racial and social barriers and building an inclusive community.

Conclusion

Overall, the conclusions to the study indicate that organizations headed by White males lack policies geared toward being congruent with the abilities of Black women in terms of recruitment, selection and promotion. Salaries do not equate with career satisfaction or equity within the system. Educational credentials such as a B.S., M.S. or Ph.D. are not linked to signal abilities in promotional decisions.

The absence of promotions tends to signal the denial of Black women's ability to compete in the system. Lastly, Black women do not perceive organizations as being fair or equitable, and Black women have difficulty forming interpersonal relationships.

In addition, this research support the assumptions that the cultural ideologies and social values of the larger society contribute to the external barriers of professional Black women's occupational achievement in the workplace. The findings are consistent with Goldenberg's 1978 conclusions that social institutions validate and perpetuate the belief and attitudes of the larger society by determining the ease or difficulty with which individuals negotiate their passage through the system. Lastly, the findings also corroborate the observations of Fernandez (1983) and Pettigrew (1987) that the current structure of social institutions continues to have an impact on the occupational achievement of professional Black women by determining their roles in the workplace.

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH SUMMARY

The intent of this research study is to conduct interviews with fifteen Black women, who occupy a managerial position in organizations that are predominately white. This will be a single study to examine the perceptions Black women have of the workplace and to begin to address the nature of their situation by explicitly focusing on their experiences. My premise is that in sharing their experiences from their own personal perspective, these Black women will provide evidence from a common experience that will define their perceptions.

The approach of this study is to examine the perceptions of these Black women representing five major work categories; i.e., health care, private and public industry, the media, and education. The setting for the study will take place in the homes of the participants located in the greater New England area and Washington, D.C.

The categories and locations were selected in order to provide a diversity of views from which to gain insight into the cultural and social experiences of the workplace.

The study study objective for this research project is to examine the perceptions that Black women have of the workplace, how these perceptions are articulated in their own terms and language thereby creating a pluralistic approach to the methods, theories and concepts of scientific research.

Qualitative research is an integral part of the study using an interview guide as its instrument. The initial contact with the participant will be by telephone in order to set the stage.

Explanations as to the expectations of the research and participants are deemed appropriate.

Information regarding the length of time and the fact of the interview to be audio-taped will be included. It will be articulated that the research study is for a doctoral dissertation, that participation is voluntary, and that the study is endorsed by a committee representing the School of Education. Participants will be mailed a description of the research, the appropriate human subject consent form and a short questionnaire. Participants will be requested to return the signed consent form and the completed questionnaire two weeks from the date received. Once these are received, telephone calls will be made to arrange interviews.

APPENDIX B
WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in a study about the perceptions of Black women in the workplace conducted by Edith Gonsal, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. I understand that the University of Massachusetts requires that people who participate in any research must first give written "informed consent."

I understand that the information generated from my participation in this study will be used primarily for doctoral research but may also be used in presentations for graduate school classes, professional conferences and written publications. In all written materials and oral presentations, pseudonyms will be substituted for the purpose of anonymity. If any materials are to be used in ways previously not described, prior consent will be used.

I will participate in one 60 minute in-depth audio-taped interview, after which complete transcripts will be made. In signing this form, I am assuring you that I will make no financial claims on you for the use of the material in my interview. Although there is no risk of physical, emotional, or mental injury from participating in this interview, the University guidelines specifies that no medical treatment will be given by the University of Massachusetts should any physical injury result from participating in this project. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time.

I, _____ have read this statement
carefully and thoroughly and agree to participate as an interviewee
under all the conditions stated above.

Participant's Signature

Edith B. Gonsal

Cance Hall

University of Massachusetts

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

The questions are summarized as follows:

- A. Section I. General Question
 - 1. Professional Background
 - 2. Self Description
- B. Section II. Organizational Environment
- C. Section III. Recommendations

A. General Question

1. Professional Background

What is the nature of your job? (What do you do?)

2. Self Description

If you were to describe yourself, what would be important for people to know about you?

Purpose: These questions will act as an introduction to the interview, thereby providing an opportunity for the interviewer and participant to get acquainted. This process should function as an ice breaker in a non-threatening manner. The question is also intended to address career-related experiences of career satisfaction.

B. Organizational Environment.

1. How would you describe your experience working for this organization?

2. If you wanted to advance your career in this organization, are there major hurdles that may limit your gaining access to these advanced positions? If so, what are they?

3. What would be some of the ways you would address these hurdles?

Purpose: Question #1 begins to frame the context of the interview from a general standpoint while Questions #2 and #3 proceed with more specific questions as seen as subsets of the general one. Questions #1, #2, and #3 are directly related to Research Question #1, i.e., what are the perceptions of Black women regarding external barriers to their occupational achievement?

4. In terms of recruitment, selection, and promotion, describe the

process that got you to your present position.

5. Does your current position match your qualifications in terms of your education and experience? What additional aspirations do you have for your career in this organization?

Purpose: Questions #4 and #5 are directly related to Research Question #1 and continue to be subsets of the general question under Section B.1. It also addresses the concerns for limited upward mobility.

6. What contributions has the organization made toward your advancement?
7. When positions or promotions become available in the organization, how are these positions communicated throughout the organization?

Purpose: Questions #6 and #7 provide opportunities to analyze the role of the organization in terms of individual development and career support. These questions also directly relate to Research Question #2, i.e., how are these external barriers manifested in the workplace?

8. What opportunities for advancement does your present position provide?

Purpose: This question provides the opportunity to discuss the prospects for advancement in terms of access to positions of opportunities and power. It also relates directly to Research Question #2, i.e., how are these barriers manifested in the workplace?

9. What is the racial composition of the workplace? How does this composition make you feel?

Purpose: This question provides the opportunity to discuss issues of exclusion and isolation from informal social networks. This question

also relates directly to Research Question #2, i.e., how are these barriers manifested in the workplace?

10. What role does your performance appraisal play in becoming eligible for promotion?

Purpose: This question provides an opportunity to provide discussions around being rated and the impact it has on advancement and future performance. This question is also directly related to Research Question #2.

11. Do you feel that discrimination plays a role in the organization? If so, in what ways?

Purpose: This question provides an opportunity to discuss with the individual their overall perceptions of external barriers and how it manifests itself in the workplace.

C. Recommendations

1. Looking back over the past five years, if you were to do it all over again, what suggestions would you offer for other young Black women following in your footsteps?
2. What coping strategies have you developed as you have worked in this organization?

Purpose: These questions underscore the common characteristics for coping and provide an opportunity to identify a prescription for other Black women.

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